The Unworthy Non-Communicant.

A

TREATISE

Shewing the

Danger of Neglecting

The Blessed

SACRAMENT

Of The

Lords Supper,

AND

Rectifying the Mistakes of many in This Age concerning it.

The FIRST PART.

The Third Impression Corrected, with Addition of Prayers before and after the Receiving the SACRAMENT.

By *William Smythies*, the Morning Lecturer at Saint *Michael Cornhil*, London.

LONDON, Printed by *T. Milbourn* for *John Southby* at the Harrow in *Cornhil*, 1692

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TO THE

WORSHIPFUL

Richard Alie Esquire, Master.

Mr. *Edward Turgis*,
Mr. *Richard Dawson*,
Mr. *Gilbert Urwyn*,
Mr. *Edward Thurstfield*, } Wardens.

Sir *Robert Clayton*,
Sir *James Smith*,
Sir *Thomas Gold*, } Aldermen.

Mr. *Thomas Tyther*,

And others of the Court of Assistants, of the Company of *Drapers*, *London*.

Honoured Sirs,

YOU have been pleased to heap so many of your Favours upon me *and mine*, that I cannot but take this little Occasion to ease my Mind, by Complaining to

the World, that I never yet had the least Opportunity to express my Thankfulness; but however, it is some satisfaction to me, that I have not ceased to Pray to God for You and your Families, in that Congregation in which you have been pleased to place me.

It was a very remarkable and unexpected Providence, which directed you to make Choice of me for the Morning Lecture, upon the Recommendation of my Two ever honoured Friends, Sir *James Smith*, and Mr. *Thomas Tyther*, considering the great Interests that had been made for other Ministers, better deserving, and better known in the City, in which I was then a Stranger.

By

By this I accounted my self the more abundantly obliged to take Care, that I did not *Do the work of the Lord negligently*: And, that I might have the better Direction in it, you were pleased to Command, That so much of the Pious Will of Mr. *John Raney* should be shewed to me, as related to the Performance of my Duty; and I hope it will not be Offensive to you, if I shew some part of it to the World, as followeth;

——And further, That before the beginning of every such Lecture on the Sabbath Day Morning in St. Michael's Church, the Lecturer, for the time being, do Reverently Read such Good and Godly Prayers allowed by the Church of England, as hath been heretofore usually perfor-

med. And my desire is, That the said Preacher and Lecturer in and by all his said Lectures and Sermons, do chiefly Aim at the suppressing of Sin, and building up the Kingdom of Grace in the Hearts of the Auditors: And that he shall, upon the first Sabbath Day Morning in every Month, being the usual Communion Day, Exhort his Auditory for the reverent and due Receiving of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: and give such Godly Instructions and Directions for the same, as shall be most fitting for that Occasion.

When I had heard this part of the Will of the Religious Donor, I resolved, by the Grace of God assisting, that I would observe what he so piously required of me.

That I have made it my Business

ſineſs to ſuppreſs Sin, my Auditors can Teſtify; and that I have obſerved his pleaſure in Exhorting to the Receiving of the Bleſſed Sacrament, may appear to you by this ſhort Treatiſe; only with this difference, that I have made it the chief part of my Work every Month (with very few Intermiſſions) to Exhort my Auditors not to neglect it; becauſe ſince the Death of that Worthy *Benefactor*, the Sin of Neglecting hath abounded more than the Sin of Unworthy Receiving. I have, with a ſorrowful Heart, obſerved, That all thoſe Sermons which are deſigned to direct and prepare the People to Receive the Holy Sacrament, have ſignified very little, becauſe there are but very

few in this vicious and divided Age that do partake of it.

The good Succeſs which I have had, (Praiſed be the God of Heaven for it,) and the continued Importunities of ſome, who had forſaken the Communion of the Church, and others who had forſaken all *Religion*, as to the Practice of it, but are now become very conſtant, and I hope very pious Communicants; have prevailed with me to Publiſh thoſe Arguments which I have been many years inſiſting and inlargeing upon: And if they have the ſame Influence upon the Readers, which they have had upon the Hearers, it will exceedingly rejoyce me; And you will have the leſs cauſe to repent of your Choice,

Choice, and be the more willing, that I ſhould ſtill perform that Service, to which I have no other Title, but the Continuance of your Favour and good Opinion of me: Which that I may deſerve, ſhall be the conſtant Endeavour of

Your moſt humble and faithful Servant,

Cripplegate, June 12th. 1683.

William Smythies.

Communicants, *I intended to ſpeak of ſome particular Caſes, which I think to be of great Moment: The* Young Mans *Pretence, the* Poor Man's *Pretence, and the* Melancholly Man's *Pretence for Non-Communicating; which are all of them very deplorable Caſes. I intended likewiſe to have Treated upon another General Head, and that is,* The Vindication and Recommendation of the Way of Adminiſtration in the Church of *England; awd to ſhew that it doth exceedingly tend to the Promotion of that true Piety and Holineſs, which all good Men do highly Contend for, and which is the great Deſign of the Bleſſed Sacrament. I have, of late, ſpent a great part of my Time and Thoughts upon this Argument, and have obſerved the Apoſtles Rule,* In meekneſs to inſtruct them that oppoſe themſelves. *But I need not trouble my Self or the World about a Vindication of the Church in any thing, becauſe it hath been ſufficiently done many Years ſince: And is again undertaken by many Miniſters of*

this

TO THE READER.

Reader,

I *Hope you will Excuſe me, that I have diſappointed your Expectation, for I have diſappointed my Own. My daily and almoſt hourly Interruptions would not permit me to Tranſcribe the whole Copy, as the Printer earneſtly deſired, before I committed it to the Preſs: And the Truth is, I was unwilling to do it, for fear that a Review of what I had done ſhould alter my Mind, and fruſtrate the Deſire of my importunate Friends. By this, through my Unskilfulneſs in taking Meaſures, I have been forced to break off very abruptly, being Confin'd to a ſhort and cheap Treatiſe. After I had conſidered the general Pretences of* Non-Com-

this City, Men of very Great Eminency, *whose Books are not onely sufficient to satisfy all that are willing to be satisfied, but to make them Champions for the Church, as many good Men have been, who were Disaffected to Her.*

To this I adde a very earnest Request: If you have been mistaken concerning the Duty or Danger of Communicating, read with a desire to be satisfied: If you have lived a sinful Life, read with a Willingness to be Reformed, that you may neither be an Unworthy Communicant, nor an Unworthy Non-Communicant; and if you receive any benefit, give Praise to the God of Heaven.

Farewel.

THE

Unworthy

Non-Communicant.

THE great Contempt that is caſt upon Religion in this Age in which we live, and eſpecially upon this great ORDINANCE of the Bleſſed Sacrament of the *LORDS SUPPER*, hath made all undertakings of this nature very ſeaſonable. I queſtion whether there was ever any people, of what Religion ſoever they were, that ever ſlighted

ſlighted any Inſtitution, which they called Divine, as many thouſands of Chriſtians ſlight the Sacrament.

If there were no other Argument to convince Chriſtians of their duty to Receive, and the danger of Neglecting; the Cunning and Subtilty of the Devil, the great Enemy of our Salvation, by which he Cheats men in reference to this Ordinance, might be of great force.

If we had lived with our Saviour in the World, or with his Apoſtles after his Aſcenſion into Heaven, we could not have imagin'd, conſidering the plain words of the Inſtitution, and the obliging Circumſtances that accompanied it, and likewiſe the care and conſtancy of the firſt Chriſtians to obſerve it according to that plain inſtitution; that ever there ſhould be a generation of Chriſtians in the World who ſhould make any Diſputes concerning it.

Who could have thought, that there ſhould have been any Prieſts or

or Miniſters, who ſhould have kept back half the Sacrament from the People, ſince we find that our Saviour gave the Cup to all thoſe to whom he gave the Bread: And the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 11.ver.27, 28, 29. in three Verſes together, of their Receiving the Cup as well as the Bread; and in one of them, expreſly requires that they ſhould *Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup*, ver. 28. And yet none will ſay, that the *Corinthians* were Prieſts or Miniſters.

Who could have imagined, that ever there ſhould have been ſuch a non-ſenſical whimſey as Tranſubſtantiation, which is contrary to the very nature of a Sacrament? It was very happy for the Primitive Chriſtians, that there was no ſuch Conceit known in their dayes; for if it had, it would exceedingly have hindred the propagating of the GOSPEL. If a Chriſtian had come to a Heathen, and told him that a peice of bread after a few Prayers, is no longer

longer Bread, but the very Body of Chriſt his Saviour, and the Heathen had taſted of it and found that it was nothing but Bread ſtill, ſurely he would have tryed to laugh that Chriſtian to death, and *to hiſs him out of the World.* If the Heathens had heard any ſuch thing, they would have concluded that Chriſtians were a ſort of men, who were deprived of their Senſes, and that all they ſaid, concerning Chriſt's Miracles, his Reſurrection, his Aſcenſion, and the power of the Holy Ghoſt which followed it, was as true as Tranſubſtantiation. And if they had ſaid that they eat their God, they would have concluded, That they deſerved to be hated of all men, and to be devoured by wild Beaſts (one of their Cruelties to the Chriſtians) who devoured their God: Or elſe they would have deſired that they might eat with them: for, they could be contented to tear him with their Teeth, to ſhew their Hatred againſt him and his Doctrine.

Beſides,

Beſides, it is an inſignificant conceit, in that no man can imagine, what good it could do him to eat the very Body of his Saviour.

Who could have imagined, that amongſt the men of our own Religion, there ſhould be a generation, that ſhould throw the Ordinance away as uſeleſs and inſignificant? pretending that they receive Chriſt in their Hearts, and therefore there is no need of the outward Act: As if none were to Receive the Sacrament, but thoſe that are Unworthy, ſuch as receive not Chriſt in their Hearts: Or as if thoſe to whom our Saviour gave it, who had forſaken all for his ſake, did not receive Chriſt in their Hearts: Or as if the Primitive Chriſtians, thoſe Holy and Bleſſed Martyrs who were conſtant Communicants, did not receive Chriſt in their Hearts. But alas, theſe poor deluded Creatures are pufft up with a conceit, that they are more holy than thoſe Bleſſed Martyrs were, and that they know the mind and deſign of

Chriſt better than they did.

But to come a little nearer to that which is my chief Deſign, Who could have imagin'd that ever there ſhould be men that expect Salvation by Chriſt (ſuch as have none of theſe Enthuſaſtick Whimſeys) who ſhould think it a very indifferent thing, whether they obſerve this Inſtitution of our Bleſſed Lord, or let it alone, although Chriſt commanded that it ſhould be Received?

There are too many amongſt us, who are Unworthy Communicants: Men that do not fear God, and walk in his wayes, who do not take care to keep their Souls pure and undefiled, for which the Bleſſed Sacrament was appointed. But there are a great many more, who are Unworthy Non-Communicants, who live in the continued Neglect of this great Ordinance; ſuch as are ſo far from crying as the Diſciples did, *Lord evermore give us this Bread*, that they concern not themſelves, whether they ever

ever partake of it. And that is not all, but they think they do very well in it: That they conſult their own Safety, and befriend their own Souls, by abſenting from ſuch a dangerous Ordinance as the Sacrament is. Nay, they do not only abſent from it themſelves, but either blame, or wonder, at leaſt, at them that adventure to come to it as thoſe that know not what they do. And they account that thoſe Laws which require men to receive the Sacrament, are moſt Tyrannical, and no more to be obeyed, than Edicts which ſhould command men, to damn their own Souls. Thus! thus! are men deluded by the Devil, and affrighted from that Ordinance, which if they rightly underſtood, they would not for all the World, live in the neglect of it.

We are offended at the Church of *Rome*, as well we may, and pitty the People of that Religion, for being content with half the Sacrament; but

what ſhall we ſay, when they tell us, that our people are content wholly to reject it?

Had we heard our Saviours Inſtitution of it, with the moſt endearing and obliging circumſtances, *The ſame night in which he was Betrayed*, which ſhewed that it was his farewel-Gift or Token of his Love: Or had we lived in the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity, and ſeen with what Conſtancy as well as Ardency, the Sacrament was Celebrated amongſt them; and if any by the Cenſures of the Church, *were kept back from the Lords Paſſover*, what a dreadful condition of Fear and Horrour they were in; how they lay proſtrate at the Church-door, and begg'd with Tears and grievous Bemoanings, the Prayers of the Communicants, that they might be Admitted again with them to the Lords Table; we would not have imagined, that ever there ſhould be a Nation, in which the Chriſtian Religion ſhould be profeſ-

ſed,

ſed, that ſhould have thouſands in it, who had rather be without the Sacrament than have it: Who ſhould think that they can better be Saved without it, and that their Receiving of it, would rather endanger, than further their Salvation;

And if we conſider likewiſe, that our Saviours Inſtitution of it was after he had ſpent the laſt, (and therefore we account it the beſt) part of his time in perſwading, and commanding his Diſciples to love one another, and to be *one as he and his Father were one*, which we may take as preparatory to his Inſtituting the Bleſſed Supper; and if to all this we add, how careful the Primitive Chriſtians were, to *obey them that had the Rule over them, and watcht for their Souls*, in obſerving thoſe Rules which they preſcribed for the Adminiſtration of the Sacrament (which Rules are, many of them, obſerved in the Church of *England* at this day); It cannot but ſeem very ſtrange, and

be very grievous to all good Christians amongst us, that there should be such Causeless Divisions, and Separations from this Blessed Ordinance.

To the end therefore, that men may not dishonour their Profession, nor be cheated of that Spiritual Food, which Christ appointed for the nourishing of their Souls to eternal Life, upon any pretence whatsoever; I earnestly intreat, and beseech all Non-Communicants, seriously and impartially to consider these following things.

I. It is the great Duty, as well as the great Priviledge, of every Christian to Receive the Lords Supper.

It is our Saviours Command, *This Do*; and it is great and apparent Disobedience in every Christian, who *does it not*. I think it very necessary, that this should be my first Assertion, because the Practice of most men doth suppose, that every man is

is left at his Liberty, and ought to be ſo, whether he will Receive it or not: And if he Receives not in a whole year, or many years, or not in all his life-time, or not till he is in his laſt ſickneſs (and then calls for it, not for any love that he hath to Chriſt, or any delight that he takes in the Ordinance, but to make an experiment, whether that will eaſe his tormented mind, when nothing elſe will) that in all this neglect he hath not offended God: That if he ſhould come to the Sacrament, he might have cauſe to repent, but his turning his back upon it, though never ſo often, *needs no Repentance.*

There are a great many, who if they are required to come to the Lords Table, anſwer, That they are not ſatisfied to Receive. But I would fain know of thoſe men, how they can be ſatisfied to let it alone and to turn their backs upon it, when others under the ſame Obligations, do make their ſolemn Approach to it.

I am ſure, there never was any Divine Inſtitution, concerning which, the people under that Diſpenſation, thought they were left at their liberty, whether they ſhould obſerve it or not. Every Male was Circumciſed. Concerning the Paſſeover, we read, *Exod.* 12. *v.* 28. *And the Children of* Iſrael *went away, and did as the Lord had commanded* Moſes, *and* Aaron, *ſo did they.* It is ſtrange to conſider, how all the Ritual and Ceremonial Laws were Obſerved: That *Burthen which they were not able to bear*, they did not dare to throw off; And yet that the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lords Supper, ſhould be ſlighted, as if it were no Divine Inſtitution, but only that which our Saviour mention'd, and left it to the pleaſure of his Diſciples and Followers, whether they would obſerve it.

I can not Imagine, what expoſition the Non-Communicant can make of the words of the Inſtitution, *This Do in Remembrance of Me.* He can not

not but ſay, that it is poſitively Enjoyned, and he cannot but ſay, that it is of Univerſal Extent. Our Saviour did not ſay, you may do This in Remembrance of Me, if you pleaſe. He did not ſay, let the Beſt of my Diſciples do This, thoſe that are ſtrongeſt and of the higheſt Rank, and let others omit it. That had been to leave both unſatisfied. The ſtrongeſt, being humble and modeſt, would alwayes be ſuſpicious, that they had not Arrived at a Degree high enough, there being no Standard. And the weakeſt would be troubled, that they were not permitted to partake, and knew not when they ſhould. But he ſaid, *This Do*, without any Reſtriction or Limitation: Commanding the Obſervance of it, by all thoſe who expect Salvation by His Death, and Sufferings.

Beſides the Inſtitution of it by our Saviour, that Admonition of the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians* is very Obſervable, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *Let a man Examine*

Examine himself, and so let him Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup. The Apostle doth not say, *Let a man Examine himself*, that he may know whether he shall Receive or not: That he may either Eat, or let it alone, according as he finds himself disposed in his own mind: If he be Religiously disposed, let him go to the Lords-Supper, if not, let him stay away. But, *Let a man Examine himself, and so let him Eat*, &c. plainly intimating, that the Sacrament was an Ordinance, not to be dispensed with, but to be prepared for. And that no man can satisfy his mind to neglect it because he is Unworthy, but must prepare and partake of it, that he may be worthy.

I think I need not say any more, to shew that it is the duty of every one, who calls himself a Christian, to Receive the Blessed Sacrament. It will be only requisite, that I speak somewhat for the determination of one case, and that is, How often every

ry one is Obliged to Receive? Becauſe, ſome may think, that unleſs they partake at every Communion, they are guilty of a ſin of Omiſſion; and if they ſhould, the Number of Communicants being very great in ſome places, it is impoſſible to be performed. To this I may Anſwer, that in regard our Saviour made no Determination in this Matter, It is requiſite, that every one ſhould take his Meaſures, from the appointment of the Church, and from his own particular exigences, and neceſſities.

At firſt, the Chriſtians met together, and received every day of the week. Their Hearts were Inflam'd with Love to their Saviour, and they were in continued expectation, by Martyrdom, to be ſent to him. Afterwards, it came to four times in the week, beſides the Feſtivals. The appointment of our Church is, that every one ſhould Receive at leaſt three times in the year; and I conceive, that the monethly Adminſtration of it,

it, in great and populous Cities is, partly, that there ſhould not be ſo great a concourſe at the Feſtivalls, as that it ſhould be impoſſible to Adminiſter it to all at once, and much more, that thoſe who are zealouſly affected, and find a greater neceſſity than others do, of Receiving it often, might have the more frequent Opportunities. For, the reaſon why it is not Adminiſtred every Lords-day (as it was formerly, and for that reaſon, the Communion Service is ſtill continued in the Church when there is no Adminiſtration) is not becauſe Chriſtians may receive the Sacrament too often, but becauſe the Commonneſs of it, may leſſen that Reverence and Eſteem, which is to be had for that great and ſolemn Ordinance. It would be a happineſs indeed, if from the number of Zealous Communicants, we ſhould find it neceſſary to Adminiſter the Sacrament every Lords-day.

II. The

II. The danger of Unworthy Receiving is not ſo great as many think it is, who flee from the Sacrament as that which would bring them into a very great, and irrecoverable danger. It is not an unpardonable Sin, but that which may be amended.

I mention this in the ſecond place, for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who are under ſuch terrible fears of being Unworthy Communicants, that they Communicate not at all, which I am apt to think, is the common caſe of Non-Communicants in our Dayes.

Theſe diſquieting Fe rs proceed from a miſtake of two e preſſions in the Apoſtles Admonition o the Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh Unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lords Body.* They do not rightly underſtand what is meant by *eating and drinking Unworthily*, nor by *eating and drinking Damnation.*

on. And for want of a right understanding of these Expressions, they start from the Sacrament, as if the Lords *Table were become a snare*, They are so affrighted, that Christs Command signifies nothing to them, nor yet the benefit which he declared to his Disciples they should receive by it. When they hear how former Ages frequented the Sacrament, they regard it not, but think that they have discovered a danger which their forefathers never found out. They think that *they* are in the surest way to Salvation that come not to the Sacrament, and the seldomer that any one Receives, the less danger he does incur to himself. And from a mistake of this place it is, that many very Pious, and therefore Worthy Communicants, come not to the Lords Table with that Joy and Alacrity of Spirit, which become the Welcome Guests of our Blessed and Bountiful SAVIOUR, but are oppressed with Fears and Terrours, as if they suspected their coming would be to their Prejudice. As

As for the word ἀναξίως, *Unworthy*: The ſenſe in which we commonly make uſe of it is a good interpretation of the Apoſtles meaning. We do not call a man Unworthy, becauſe he hath not attained to any high Accompliſhment: becauſe he is of meaner or lower degree than others: nor do we call a man Unworthy, becauſe of ſome Faults that he is guilty of, conſidering that *in many things we Offend all.* But we call him Unworthy, who doth a baſe Act from a baſe Deſign. We call him Unworthy who is a Diſſembler, who pretends Friendſhip to another for his own ends, but it appears that he hath no real Kindneſs for him. He is Unworthy, who caſts contempt upon him whom he ought to Reverence and Honour as his Superiour. In ſuch a ſenſe as this is, we are to underſtand the meaning of the Apoſtle. He is an Unworthy Communicant, who pretends to be the Diſciple of the Lord, and takes no care to keep his Commandments. He is an Unworthy

Communicant,

Communicant, who pretends great Honour and Reverence for his Saviour and his Ordinances, and yet comes Unreverently before him, which was the *Corinthians* caſe.

For the right underſtanding of this word, no man muſt make the eſteem which he hath for himſelf to be his Rule: for then we ſhould conclude, that our Saviour made a Feaſt with a reſolution that none ſhould partake of it. The impenitent Sinners Guilt tells him that *he* is Unworthy, and the penitent Sinners Humility tells him that *he* is Unworthy: And ſo by conſequence, *None* muſt come to the Sacrament. According to this Rule, the Apoſtle himſelf was an Unworthy Communicant; for he calls himſelf the *Chief of Sinners*. If this were the Rule, every man ſhould be a Worthy Communicant, according to the good conceit that he hath of himſelf. The boaſting Phariſee ſhould be Worthy, and the poor humble and penitent Publican ſhould be Unworthy.

It

It is great pity, but that every good Christian should understand the true sense of the Word, because, otherwise those who are most Worthy, by reason of their great Humility and self-Abasement, are most apt to conclude *themselves Unworthy*. It had been great pity, that the Centurion should have lost his errand to our Saviour because, he accounted himself Unworthy that he should come *under his Roof*. Our Saviour would have accounted it great pity, that the woman of *Cana* should have been rejected, because, she accounted her self as Unworthy as a *Dog*. It is great pity that any humble Christian should be kept from the Sacrament because he thinks himself Unworthy of it; for, the sense of his Unworthiness doth shew that he is Worthy.

Those who are under this mistake, may be better Informed, by reading the Form of Administration in our Church. We do not come to the Lords Table, and say, 'Lord, we have 'now gotten a great Conquest over our

'ſins, we are now Arrived to a high 'meaſure of Grace and Piety beyond 'other men, and therefore, now we 'account our ſelves Worthy Commu-'nicants, and ſuch as are fit to Sup with 'our Lord. But on the contrary, *we acknowledge and bewail our manifold ſins and wickedneſs, which we have grievouſly committed*; we acknowledge, that *we are not Worthy to gather the Crumbs under his* Table, *&c.* By which it appears, that none are to Receive the Sacrament, but thoſe that, in this ſenſe, judge themſelves Unworthy of it.

That every one therefore, may have a right Notion of this Word, *Unworthy:* The Rule which they muſt judge by, is the Word of God. Every man muſt account himſelf Worthy or Unworthy to Receive the Sacrament, (not according to what he thinks of himſelf, but) according to what God's Word declares concerning him. They are Worthy, whom God accepts of, according to his Covenant of Grace, declared in, and by the Goſpel. He that

that is ſincerely Penitent, though he cannot think himſelf Worthy, yet, God declares him to be ſo; and therefore, he is a Worthy Communicant, and is offenſive to God, and injurious to himſelf if he comes not to the Bleſſed Sacrament. He that ſincerely deſires, and endeavours to walk in the wayes of God and Religion, though by reaſon of his many failings in his Duty, he thinks himſelf Unworthy, yet, God accounts him Worthy, and therefore, he ought to come to the Sacrament, and to come with great Joy and Alacrity of mind. And the Sacrament is very proper for him, becauſe, it is an excellent meanes to help him againſt that which troubles him.

There is a twofold Unworthyneſs; as to the Perſon, and as to the manner of Communicating. As to the Perſon, when he is in a ſinful and impenitent State, when he allows himſelf in ſinful Practiſes, and takes pleaſure in them, though he knows

that he Acts contrary to the Command of Christ, either trying to satisfy himself with Atheistical hopes that there is no World but this, or else with the hopes of an after-Repentance, which is the common *snare* of the Devil. This Person can not be a Worthy Communicant, for he is at enmity with God in his mind: He is a Rebel against the Law of Christ, which his intention to repent afterwards, doth suppose. He is one who cannot think himself welcome to Christ, because, he will not suffer him to be his Lord *to Rule over him.*

There is Unworthyness likewise, as to the manner of Receiving, and that is, when a man doth not Receive with Reverence as becomes him in that solemn Approach to God. This was a great fault which the *Corinthians* were guilty of. They came Unreverently and disorderly to the Sacrament from their love-Feasts, forgetting that they were not in their own Houses but in Gods House, and that

that they were not eating at their own Tables but at the Lords Table. This is the proper meaning of the Apoſtles expreſſion in the next words, *Not diſcerning the Lords Body*; an expreſſion which I have heard ſome Papiſts make uſe of, for their whimſey of Tranſubſtantiation, as if *they* Eat and Drank Unworthily who did not diſcern by Faith, that it was the very Body of our Saviour: but moſt certain it is, that the Apoſtle had another meaning. The word διακρίνω ſignifies both to diſcriminate and to ſanctify, and ſo the propereſt Account that can be given of it is, that he who doth not Receive after a devout and religious manner, is Unworthy.

I hope I have ſaid enough to take off the unneceſſary, and cauſeleſs fears of thoſe who are humble Chriſtians, and that they will not any longer give the Enemy of their Salvation this *Advantage againſt them*, but that they will take right Meaſures, and be ſo far

from keeping from the Sacrament because they think themselves Unworthy, that they will account it a good qualification for their *welcome* at the Lords Table. Let such persons look into the Holy Gospel, and they will find, that such persons as *they* are, were not only accepted of Christ, but highly commended by him, and therefore are the most Welcome Guests at his Table.

The next thing to be considered, is, what the Apostle means by *eating and drinking Damnation*; which is the affrighting expression that makes thousands afraid to Receive the Sacrament. The trembling sinner thinks that this brings men into the condition of those who were guilty of the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: that they have committed a sin which shall never be forgiven them: That they having received Unworthily, are irrecoverably Lost and Ruin'd: That they have swallowed down Poison to their Souls, and can never *vomit it*

up

up again. And if these be the interpretations that sinners make of those Expressions, that it is very hard to say who is worthy to Receive, and yet if a man be an Unworthy Receiver he is from thenceforth in a state of Damnation; It is no wonder that there are so few Communicants. That I may therefore rectify these mistakes, I desire these things may be considered.

1. It was not the design of the Apostle, by this Expression, to scare the wickedest men amongst Christians from the Sacrament, but only that they might Reform and come to it. He did not suppose that what he said would make any afraid to perform their Duty in observing this Ordinance, nor had it any such effect upon those to whom he wrote this Epistle. He was a more faithful Steward and Servant of Christ, than to do any thing with design, to discourage those from coming to his Masters Table, who were invited to prepare, and

to come to it. If he had, he had been as Unworthy a Miniſter, as the worſt ſinner can be an Unworthy Communicant. It is of great moment, and may exceedingly tend to the ſatisfaction of the ſcrupulous, when they read the Scriptures, to conſider well what the deſign of the Pen-man is: for by this means they will prevent miſapplications, which are of very ill Conſequence.

2. The word which is tranſlated Damnation, is κρίμα which ſignifies Judgment, and doth as well ſignifie any temporal evil which befalls men in this world as the puniſhment in the helliſh State. And ſo the meaning is this and no more; He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily offends God, and provokes the Judgment of God againſt himſelf.

3. The caſe of the *Corinthians* is to be conſidered, and that may tend exceedingly to the ſatisfaction of thoſe that are thus affrighted: 1. They had received Unworthily; but yet the Apoſtle doth

doth not tell them that they are Damned, or that they are in a loſt condition, and muſt now periſh for ever; but Admoniſhes them to be more careful for the time to come, that they might come with better Preparation than they had before. 2. In eating and drinking Unworthily, they had eat and drank Damnation to themſelves in the Apoſtles ſenſe: They had eat and drank Judgment, as appears in the next Verſe. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly amongſt you, and many ſleep.* From which it is concluded, that God ſent a Plague at *Corinth* for their Unworthy Receiving. 3. It muſt be conſider'd, that the Apoſtle only blames the *Corinthians* for that Fault which they were then guilty of, which was their Unworthy Receiving. There were no Chriſtians in thoſe dayes that were Non-Communicants. They generally Valued the Sacrament above their lives, and an opportunity of receiving, though it were Adminiſtred every day in the week, above all the enjoyments of the World.

World. There was therefore no occaſion for the Apoſtle to tell them the Danger of living in the neglect of the Sacrament: If there had, no Man in his Wits can imagine but that the Apoſtle would have threatned *Damnation* as well to Unworthy Neglecters as he did to Unworthy Receivers of the Bleſſed Sacrament.

4. If this which the Apoſtle ſaith of Eating and Drinking Damnation be the cauſe of Mens being afraid to come to the Sacrament, they may for the like reaſon, be afraid to perform other Duties of Religion.

If any Impenitent Sinner Prayes to God, without a reſolution to avoid the ſame courſe of Life, he cannot think but his Prayers will provoke God to puniſh him, rather then obtain favour to him: That he hath reaſon to expect that the Judgment of God, both in reference to this Life, and that which is to come, ſhould be the conſequent of it. He is one who confeſſeth his ſin to God, but doth not ſo much as intend to for-

forſake it for the time to come: And this muſt certainly be a great Provocation of the All-ſeeing God; For a Man to pretend that he is ſorry for what he hath done, when he is not reſolved to amend.

If an earthly King could know that the Malefactor, who beggs his Life, intended to do the ſame wickedneſs for which he deſerved to dye before, he would be ſo far from granting his Petition, that he would haſten his Execution.

The Almighty God, the Great King of Heaven knows this to be the Sinners caſe, that although he ſtands condemned for his evil deeds, yet he beggs pardon, onely as a thing in courſe, without any reſolution of amendment; and can it be imagin'd that any thing leſs than Damnation ſhould be the end of this Sinner? There is one caſe in which the Sinner doth directly Pray Damnation to himſelf, according to the Apoſtles Phraſe, and that is the caſe of the Malitious and Revengeful Sinner, he Prayes to God *to forgive him*

him his treſpaſſes as he forgives others: That is not at all. It is as if he ſhould ſay, Lord be thou revenged on me, for I am reſolved to be revenged on my Brother: Beſides, there is no more cauſe of Terrour from this Expreſſion of the Apoſtle by which Sinners are ſcared from the Sacrament, than there is in that of *Solomon* by which wicked men may be afraid to Pray, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The Sacrifice*, that is the Prayer, *of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord.* He that doth that which God loaths, and is an Abomination to him, certainly can expect nothing but *Damnation* to be the end of it. I would fain know of the Non-Communicant whether, if the Apoſtles expreſſion had been, *He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily is an Abomination unto the Lord*, and *Solomons* expreſſion had been, The Prayer of the wicked bringeth Damnation to himſelf; that he would have Received the Sacrament, but never pray'd to God.

I may likewiſe inſtance in that great Duty

Duty of hearing Gods Word. Certainly every man will grant, that for a man to come to the House of God, to hear what God requires of him, without any intent to do it, and accordingly comes from hearing Gods Commands with a resolution to break them, can expect nothing less than *Damnation* to be the consequent of it. And although this be the case of thousands of Sinners, yet they are not afraid to hear Gods Word. There is no more cause of Terrour from this expression of the Apostle to Unworthy Communicants, than there is from many Expressions of our Saviour and his Apostles concerning Unworthy Hearers of Gods Word. I may instance first, in that of our Saviour, *Luk.* 8. 18. *Take heed therefore how you hear; whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.* If our Saviour had onely given the Caution, *Take heed how you hear*, it might startle the unprofitable Hearer, and give him just

juſt cauſe to expect *Judgment* if he were not careful; But our Saviour adding, *For whoſoever hath to him ſhall be given, and from him that hath not, from him ſhall be taken away, even that which he ſeemeth to have*, is an expreſſion which ſignifies the condition of a careleſs Hearer to be ſo forlorn, that it may make every ſuch ſinner afraid to enter into Gods Houſe. The meaning of our Saviour by that proverbial ſaying is, He that is an Obedient Hearer ſhall grow in Grace and Knowledge, and be in the caſe of a Rich man who encreaſeth his Riches to a great Eſtate; but the careleſs Hearer who doth not give diligent Attention, and who comes to hear without reſolution to Practiſe, is like a man of low Degree who by taking no care to improve his Stock, loſeth that little that he hath, and comes to intolerable Beggary and Miſery. How dreadful is the Condition of that man, who may be ſaid to *hear away*, all that is good? Who, the longer he Hears, the leſs he Regards, and the worſe he is.

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I might inſtance likewiſe in the compariſon which our Saviour makes between a diſobedient Hearer, and the fooliſh man who built his Houſe upon the Sand, *Mat.* 7. 26. of which he ſaith, *great was the fall of it.* We can not imagine the great fall of a Diſobedient Hearer to be any thing leſs than a fall into Damnation & everlaſting Miſery: And yet men are not therefore afraid to hear Gods Word who refuſe to do it. I may inſtance likewiſe in the expreſſions of the Apoſtles; St. *James* ſaith, *Chap.* 1. v. 22. *Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves.* How do men deceive themſelves, but by expecting Salvation from Hearing, and Damnation muſt be their Portion for not doing? And yet the ſinner doth not ſay, I ſhall but deceive my ſelf, and therefore 'tis in vain for me to go to Gods Houſe to Hear his Word. There is another expreſſion of the Apoſtle; 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. *To the one we are a ſavour of death unto death.* The Apoſtle is ſpeaking concerning the Miniſtry of the

the Goſpel, and the different Effects which it hath upon men in reference to another world. *It is the ſavour of death unto death*; an expreſſion alluding to ſtrong perfumes which are pleaſant to ſome, but are, like poiſon, ſuddainly deſtructive to others. It is as if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, Though to ſome our Preaching the Goſpel is exceedingly beneficial, yet to others who regard it not it is moſt certainly deſtructive, for it brings eternal Death. There is more terrour in this Expreſſion than there is in that of the Apoſtles *eating and drinking Damnation*; for that, as I have ſhewed, ſignifies any temporal evil as well as the Puniſhment of another ſtate; But this of the Apoſtle ſignifies only the Death of the ſoul in another world; And yet, for all this men, are not afraid to hear the Goſpel Preached to them. By this I hope it hath appeared, that there is no more reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould be afraid to Receive the Sacrament from that Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, than

than they ſhould be to perform other Duties of Religion, conſidering what the Scripture ſaith concerning thoſe that are Unworthy Performers of them.

5. I may add in the laſt place, That this Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, how ſevere ſoever it may ſeem to be, is no part of revealed Religion properly ſo called. Revealed Religion is *that* of God, which we could not know if it were not told us. But this of Unworthy Communicants eating & drinking judgment to themſelves, is that which the *Corinthians* and all Chriſtians might know, though the Apoſtle had never ſaid it. Every man, by the light of natural Reaſon, knows that he who doth not live in obedience to the Laws of his God, or comes Unreverently before him, is not accepted of him, but on the contrary, doth provoke him to anger, and conſequently to puniſh that offender who doth thus diſobey and contemn him.

If Heathens had been negligent or

unreverent in their Sacrifices, and a plague had hapned amongſt them, as it was ſuppoſed to be the caſe of the *Corinthians*, they would doubtleſs have concluded, that the Plague came becauſe of their Neglect of their Duty. And therefore it is a hard caſe that men ſhould be ſo much afraid of the Sacrament, becauſe they are told of a danger, which Heathens themſelves might have known in the like caſe.

'Tis very probable that the *Corinthians* were ſo apprehenſive of the infinite love of Chriſt, and of the benefit which was to be received by this Ordinance, that they were not ſo well aware of the danger of Unworthy Receiving as they might have been; and therefore the Apoſtle thinks fit to give them this Admonition, by which they might underſtand that (although the benefit was great to the Worthy Receiver, yet) a Man muſt not be ſo preſumptuouſly confident of it, as to think that he may come to it without a due conſideration of, and preparation for,

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such a near and solemn approach to God.

III. The danger of Unworthy Neglecting the Sacrament is generally greater than the danger of Unworthy Receiving. I know that this Assertion will seem strange to many and may be very offensive to some, who for many Years have heard the Duty of *preparing* mightily urged, but have never heard that it is a Duty to *partake*. They have heard the danger of Unworthy Receiving strained beyond its due bounds and limits, but have heard nothing of the danger of living in the continued Neglect of this Ordinance. But though I do not spe k the Sense of a great many in this v cious and divided Age, yet I hope very one will grant that I speak the Sence of all Mankind in all former Ages, in reference to divine and positive Institutions. Those who of old were called Gods People, because they had entred into Covenant with him had positive Institu-

tions from God, which they were duly to obſerve, and to *ſanctify themſelves* for the performance of. We are not to imagine that they thought their external Sanctifications were enough, but that there muſt be an inward Sanctification of the Heart, to which the other did relate. And although they were defective in this, (as appears by the great complaints which God made againſt them) yet they did not dare to neglect the Obſervance of Gods poſitive Inſtitutions; but all the people were careful to do what God commanded as to the outward Act, though they were negligent as to the inward diſpoſition of their Minds and preparation for it. When our Saviour came into the World, the Paſſeover was duly obſerved by thoſe whom he condemned as the worſt men in the world, but yet he no where tells them that they ſhould not have obſerv'd it, or that it had been better that the Ordinance had been wholly laid aſide. *Though all were not* Iſrael *that were of* Iſrael,

Israel, yet all accounted it their Duty to observe the Ordinances of *the God of* Israel.

If we likewise consider the Practice of the first Christians, we shall find, that they accounted Non-Communicating to be the greatest danger. If they had accounted that there was less danger in being Non-Comunicants, or that they might have been very good Christians though they did not Receive the Sacrament, or that it would be no great danger to their own Souls to live in the Neglect of it, they would not have lain prostrate at the Church Doors, begging the Prayers of the Faithful, that they might be admitted to the Sacrament; but have liv'd very contentedly without it, as a great many do in our dayes, who it may be will say, that it was the Ignorance of those Christians which made them so fondly desirous of it. Excommunication, by which they were debarred from coming to the Sacrament, would have been no

trouble to them, but they would have lived very contentedly without it. Besides, we find that when the *Corinthians* had received Unworthily, the Apostle charges them *to examine themselves*, that they might be better prepared. But afterwards, when Christians began to be so remiss as not to receive at all, it was determin'd in a Council at *Antioch*, That all Non-Communicants should be Excommunicated: They were not thought worthy of the Name or Society of Christians, who should turn their backs upon the Holy Ordinance of the blessed *JESUS*, as if it were unnecessary to observe it. Doubtless the most wicked Christian in the World, will not be punished for coming to the Sacrament, simply considered, but because he did not prepare his Mind by leaving off his wickedness. He did that which was requir'd of him, as to the outward Act onely, he did not take care to prepare himself for it. But more particularly

1. Non-Communicating is a more manifest

manifeſt contempt of the Authority of God. A Law-giver is exceedingly deſpiſed when his Laws are not obſerved. It is an Argument that his Authority is diſputed, or that thoſe whom he commands, are not obliged to obey him. Who can imagine that the Unworthy Non-Communicant owns, that God hath exalted Chriſt *To be a Prince and a Saviour*, and that *he hath given him a Name above every Name*, when he turns his back upon his Inſtitution, as if it were ſome Uſurper that hath ſaid *Do this*, and one whom Men need not own as their *Prince*, and as their *Saviour*? This is ſuch a Contempt of Chriſt's Authority, and ſuch a Reproach to the Chriſtian Religion, that I may ſay *Tell it not in* Gath, *&c.* Let not the Heathens hear that Chriſtians have ſo little regard to their Chriſt, as that they do not obey him in that Command, which had a ſpecial Relation to what they ſay he did for them. They have more Reverence and Shew, more Regard and Obedience to their *Gods*

which are no Gods, as appears by the Account we have of their Sacrifices. Let not the *Mahometans* hear of it: They are diligent to observe the Commands of their *Mahomet*, in abstaining from what he hath forbidden, and in their Religious Duties, Praying five times every day, because they say that he had Authority from God, and what he commanded they are obliged to do. Tell it not to the *Jews*; they observe the Ordinances of *Moses* to this day in many things, because they own his Authority from God. These Men of other Religions, shame Christians, and may conclude, if they hear of Non-Communicants, That there are many who call themselves Christians, who do not believe in their Hearts that their Christ came from God; for they do not account themselves obliged to observe his Rites and Institutions. This Contempt of Christ's Authority, cannot be so deeply Charged upon the Unworthy Receiver. That Servant who is not careful to do his Duty af-

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ter ſuch a manner as his Maſter requires of him, is not ſo guilty of Contempt, as he that turns his back, and doth not do it at all. That Chriſtians, becauſe Chriſt requires them to be Chriſtians indeed, his Diſciples, and becauſe they are threatned with Puniſhment, if they are not careful to perform their Duty as they ought, and as they may do; ſhould think to avoid Puniſhment, by not doing their Duty at all, is ſuch a way to avoid Puniſhment, as no Man ever yet thought of, and nothing but the Deluſion of the Devil could ever put into the Minds of Men.

2. It is a greater Contempt of the Love of Chriſt. The Love of God the Father, in ſending Chriſt into the World, is unconceivably great: *God ſo loved the World*, ſo infinitly, ſo tranſcendently, ſo beyond all that Tongues can expreſs, or Hearts conceive: And Chriſts giving his Body to be *broken*, and his Blood to be *ſhed*, is ſuch an expreſſion of Love, as is only fit to put

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us into an Extasy of Admiration. The Apostle tells us that it hath *length and breadth, and depth and heighth*, and that it is a *Love which passeth knowledge*. A Love which cannot be described, and therefore God allows us an Eternity to admire it: That God should become Man: That *He* should dye, to whom it belongs to give Life; that *He* should Dye for *Enemies*; that *He* should Dye such an ignominious Death, as the Death of the Cross, *&c.* Now we must know, That this Sacrament is an Ordinance; which Christ appointed on purpose to give us a Lively Remembrance, and a Symbolical Representation of that unconceivable Love: And although the Unworthy Communicant is Unworthy indeed, in that it hath not such an Influence upon his Life as it ought to have, yet in regard that he comes to the Sacrament, and by his outward Reverence doth acknowledge Christs Love to Sinners, (and it may be, hath Grief in his Heart at that time, to think that that Love hath not

obliged

obliged him to better Obedience) he is not ſo much to blame as the Non-Communicant who turns his back upon the Ordinance, as if Chriſt's Love exhibited and repreſented by it, were not worthy of his Notice.

3. They caſt great Contempt upon the Wiſdom of Chriſt, who frequent not the Bleſſed Sacrament. Their Neglect of it, ſuppoſeth that they think there is no great need of it, or no great good to be received by it.

There are a ſort of People amongſt us, who upon all Occaſions declare, that they hope to be ſaved, who yet think they need not Receive the Sacrament; And what do theſe men leſs, than charge Chriſt, that this Ordinance, which he appointed as a Means to Salvation, might as well have been let alone. It is through their own great Folly, that they call the Wiſdom of him, who is *the Wiſdom of God*, into Queſtion; their not conſidering, that the good that is to be Received, is only from the Bleſſing of Heaven, upon that

that Ordinance which Chriſt appointed. The Non-Communicant in this caſe, is like *Naaman* the Leper, 2 *Kings* 5. 10, 11. who was willing to go to the man of God to be recovered of his Leproſy; but he was deſirous that it might be done without his uſing any Means for it? eſpecially ſuch as he could not underſtand ſhould afford him any Benefit. Eliſha *ſent a Meſſenger unto him, ſaying, Go and waſh in* Jordan *ſeven times, and thy fleſh ſhall come again unto thee, and thou ſhalt be clean. But* Naaman *was wroth, and went away, and ſaid, Behold, I thought he will ſurely come out to me, and ſtand, and call on the Name of the Lord his God, and ſtrike his hand over the place, and recover the Leper. Are not* Abana *and* Pharpar *Rivers of* Damaſcus, *better than all the Waters of* Iſrael? *May I not waſh in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a Rage.* In like manner the Non-Communicant knows no Reaſon, Why he ſhould go to the Sacrament to be cured of his

Leproſy.

Leprosy. It is enough, he thinks, that Christ dyed for Sinners, and that he believes it, and that he is sorry for his Sins, and asks God pardon, or intends to do so: He knows no need of the Sacrament, or to what purpose it was appointed. But as *Naaman* kept his Leprosy till he was perswaded to wash in *Jordan*; so Sinners have all the reason in the World to expect, that the Leprosy of their Souls should continue till they frequent the Sacrament, it being an Ordinance which Christ appointed, and therefore they have no reason to expect the Cure of their Souls without it.

The Unworthy *Communicant* Acknowledges, by his devout Receiving of it, that it is an Ordinance of Heaven, worthy of all Reverence (though he fails in examining himself before he comes to partake of it) and that from which great Benefit is to be expected; but the Unworthy *Non-Communicant* slights it as inconsiderable and unnecessary to be observed. And every

ry one knows, that in ſo doing, he calls into queſtion the Wiſdom of our Bleſſed Saviour.

4. Non-Communicants are worſe than Unworthy Receivers, in that they caſt away the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and that Publick Declaration of the Benefit of the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt, for which this Ordinance was appointed. When our Saviour ſaid, *Do this in remembrance of Me:* And the Apoſtle, *As oft as ye Eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lords Death until He come*; or καταγγέλλετε, declare ye the Lord's Death. It is very plain, that the Sacrament was not only intended for the private Good and Benefit of the Receiver, but to bear up the Honour of God and the Chriſtian Religion in the World: That it ſhould be uſed for a publick Declaration, that Chriſt is the Saviour of the World, and that there is no other Name under Heaven by which a Man can be ſaved: That his Death and Sufferings was the expiatory

piatory Sacrifice for the Sin of the whole World: And that thoſe who have not the Goſpel Preached, but have only the Guide of their own Conſciences, and of Natural Religion, are ſaved by vertue of his Death, though they do not know him, becauſe that it is by him that God's Anger is appeaſed towards Mankind. By this we *ſhew forth the Lords Death*, what a Great and Mighty Saviour he made himſelf by dying for Mankind.

The Unworthy Receiver is exceedingly to blame, becauſe he fails in the Practice of Religion: But the Non-Communicant is more Unworthy, for he fails not only in the Practice, but in the very Profeſſion likewiſe. It were not improper to ask him, when he turns his back upon the Sacrament, What Religion he is of, that we may give an Account to them that ask us? If he ſaith a Chriſtian, Why doth he not own it, by his ſolemn Approach to that Ordinance which Chriſt appointed for that very end? If he

ſaith

ſaith he goes to Church, ſo may (and ſometimes do) *Jews* and *Mahometans*, Men of other Religions.

5. Non-Communicating is of more dangerous and pernicious Conſequence than Unworthy Receiving. It is not only in many Reſpects more offenſive to God, but likewiſe more deſtructive to the Souls of Men. This may appear by a more general, or a more particular and ſpecial Conſideration. Non-Communicating is the great In-let, both of dreadful Diviſions and horrid Debaucheries; which with ſorrowful hearts we have great cauſe to complain of.

It hath been the great In-let to all manner of *Diviſions*, by which the Church of Chriſt, which is his Body, is torn Limb from Limb, and, we fear, is never like to be healed in our days. The Caſe is plain, though there were nothing of ſad Experience to be alledged.

So long as Men keep in Societies, though but Civil Societies, and are obliged

liged to obſerve Rules and Orders; if any Controverſie ariſe, the diſſatiſied Perſon, partly by his Obligation to thoſe Rules and Orders, and partly by the Advice and Councel of the reſt of the Society, doth not preſently ſeparate but ſubmit; or if he be ſtubborn and inſolent, he may be turn'd out of the Society, and be lyable to ſevere Penalties, till he be more modeſt, humble and compliant. But if he thinks himſelf under no Obligation to obſerve the Rules and Orders of that Society, and no Penalty be inflicted, then he breaks away & makes Parties, and brings all into Confuſion and Diſorder.

In the Caſe of the Sacrament: If every one, who is admitted by Baptiſm to be a Member of the Church of Chriſt, doth account it his Duty as a Member of that Society, to obſerve the Rules and Orders of the Church, Peace and Union is maintain'd; but if Men think they are not oblig'd, but wholly left at their Liber-

ty, whether they will partake of this Ordinance or let it alone, then it's no wonder if the Members of that Society be ſcattered into as many Diviſions and Parties, as the great Enemy of the Sacrament and of their Salvation pleaſe.

For many years after our Bleſſed Reformation from Popery, there were ſo many received the Sacrament, that the number of Inhabitants in every Pariſh, was beſt known by the Number of Communicants. In thoſe happy days of the Churches Peace, Maſters and Miſtreſſes came at one Communion, and their Servants, after publick Catechiſing, and private Examination by their Miniſters, came the next Communion. It could not be imagin'd, but that there were ſome Unworthy Communicants amongſt them: There were ſuch in the Church of *Corinth*, and will be in all Churches to the end of the World. But that Evil was nothing in compariſon of the Miſchiefs that have happen'd ſince men took

took their Liberty to forſake the Sacrament. Pariſhes now may better be computed by the number of Non-Communicants, and thoſe that run from the Sacrament, than of thoſe that come to it.

I cannot in this place forbear mentioning the ſubſtance of what I lately heard from a very Aged, Grave & Pious Perſon, who is now very Conformable to the Church of *England*. We were lamenting that the People would not be perſwaded to come to the Sacrament, and that their abſenting was occaſion'd by the ſad Diſtractions and Diviſions that are in the Church. I 'was, ſaid he, one of thoſe, who in 'the beginning of the late Troubles, 'found Fault with the Surplice, and 'with the Croſs in Baptiſm, and there 'were others who were diſcontented 'at thoſe things, who were good and 'holy Men. But I am confident, if 'they could have foreſeen the dread-'ful Miſchiefs that have happened un-'to the Church, they would never

'have so much as opened their Lips, 'much less have done any thing a-'gainst the Church as it then was.

I know there ought to be great care taken to keep off scandalous Communicants, and there would be greater care taken, if the Divisions of the Church did not hinder it. But I think all sober People will say, That if all the vicious Men in *England* came to the Sacrament, it would not be so great a Scandal to Religion, as the Dreadful Divisions and Separations that have been in the Church, since the People took their Liberty to turn their backs upon that holy Ordinance, and many Ministers made it their Business to make them afraid of it, by Preaching the Danger of Unworthy Receiving, but not of Unworthy Neglecting of it.

Another great Evil which is the Consequence of Non-Communicating, is horrid Debauchery and Profaneness; such as never was or could be, whilst the Sacrament was frequented. There

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are Thouſands in this Age, who call themſelves Chriſtians, and often ſay, that they *hope to be ſaved*, but are ſo far from living like Chriſtians, that they would be abandoned by ſober Heathens as unfit for humane Society. If we look into the Records of Antient Times, we ſhall find, That though there were grievous Wickedneſſes and Impieties, yet they were attended with ſome kind of fear and ſhame; but in our Age, Wickedneſs inſults, as if it hoped to have a better Reputation than Piety and Vertue, in the World. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Sins of Heathens, *Eph.* 5. 11. calls them the *Unfruitful works of Darkneſs*. And in the next Verſe he tells the *Epheſians*, That *it is a ſhame to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done in Secret*. But in our Age, Wickedneſs appears Openly, as if there were no fear or ſhame that belonged to it.

In former Times, they that were *drunk*, *were drunk in the Night*; but now 'tis ſcarcely accounted a Sin, and

therefore is become a Noon-Day Entertainment. In former Times, it was the Sin of a rude ungoverned Rabble. When *Hannah* was falſely accuſed of being drunk, *Count not*, ſaid ſhe, *thine Handmaid for a Daughter of* Belial. *Belial* ſignifies *without Yoak*, and it is as if ſhe had ſaid, I am none of thoſe unruly forlorn Miſcreants that will be drunk. I ſuppoſe the Proverb may be very antient, *As Drunk as a Beggar*. But now 'tis the Sin (*if I may be ſo bold as to call it ſo*) of Lords and Gentlemen, and is in as much Eſteem amongſt too many of them, as if it were ſome brave Atchievment, for which a Man is willing to adventure the Ruine of himſelf and Family.

Whoredom is another Sin which hath exceedingly abounded. It is an *Old* Sin, but the Impudence that attends it, is *New*. In *Jobs* Time, *The eye of the Adulterer waited for the Twy-light*, Chap. 24. 15. The Whore which *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* 7. 9. was only to be found *in the Twy-light, in the Even-*

Evening, in the black and dark Night, and ſhe was accounted to have an *impudent face*, v. 13. But how impudent are thoſe Whores, who appear in the open ſtreets at Noon Day, tempting all that paſs by to their filthy Embraces? We read in the Scripture of the *Attire of a Harlot*, but now there is in this immodeſt Age no diſtinction; but by the *ſhew* of Women, we may ſuſpect that the Attire of Harlots is all the Faſhion.

Theſe two Sins have of late years ſo much abounded, that there are thouſands who are ſo far from living like Chriſtians, that they are degenerated from the common Principles of Humanity, and would be a ſhame to Heathens if they liv'd amongſt them. Theſe Sins have made many to become worſe than Beaſts, in the eſteem of all that are Vertuous. And I am ſure they have made them become Devils to themſelves and Families.

There is another dreadful Sin which abounds, and that is profane Swearing.

A Sin which men commit only becauſe the Devil will have it ſo; for there is neither profit nor pleaſure in it. Some are ſeldom guilty of it but when they are provoked to Anger, and then they muſt be revenged by abuſing the name of God and deſtroying their own Souls: which lets us ſee what fools the Devil makes them that forſake Religion. Sometimes it is attended with mirth and jollity. Laughter and Swearing go together, as if to abuſe the Holy Name of God were a help to Mirth. But the reaſon of it is this, the Devil will not have his ſervants to have innocent Mirth; if they ſhould, their Damnation would not be encreaſed as he would have it upon all occaſions. Sometimes we obſerve men ſwearing in their ordinary Converſe as if it were a grace to their ſpeech: Of which the trueſt account that I can give is; that their Hearts are ſo full of Wickedneſs, and of contempt of God and of Religion, that it continually, as a thing in courſe, runs out at their Mouths.

I may add another Impiety which doth exceedingly encreaſe, and that is Contempt of Religion upon the Lords Day. Men of other Religions may call it the Devils Day, conſidering what horrid Wickedneſſes men are guilty of on that Day. He hath more ſervice done him on that day than in all the week beſides. 'Tis become the Alehouſ-keepers Market or rather Fair-day. If Chriſtians ſhould regard their Souls on that day, thoſe traders complain that they could not pay their Rents.

Theſe Wickedneſſes and many more have abounded ſince the days of Non-Communicating. If theſe Ungodly Wretches had not turn'd their backs upon the Sacrament at firſt, when they were of years in which they might have been capable of Receiving it and the Church requir'd it; if they had been under a Neceſſity of receiving it, no man can imagine that they could have been guilty of ſuch horrid Sins, and have lived ſuch wicked Lives. 'Tis poſſible that ſome might have been

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in a ſinful ſtate, and ſo have been Unworthy Communicants, and thereby have eaten and drank *Damnation* to themſelves; But now great Numbers do moſt apparently damn their own Souls to the bottomleſs Pit of Deſtruction, and they damn the Souls of others, and in a ſenſe, they may be ſaid to damn all Religion, whilſt this Ordinance is neglected.

If theſe Profligate Wretches were ſtrictly required to come to the Sacrament, they would be under a Neceſſity of Reforming, that they might be admitted to it. There would be an Admonition from the Miniſter. There would be terrible Checks from their own Conſciences, which the Sacrament would rouze and cauſe to terrifie them. And if after (upon their promiſe of Amendment) they are admitted to the Sacrament, they ſhall return to their former Courſes; Other Communicants would take Notice of them, and give them friendly and godly Admonitions, and if thoſe prevail

vail not, they would at length complain to the *Church*, by which they would be forced to live better, or be abandoned the Society of Chriſtians. But when Men turn their backs upon the Sacrament, they are then ſtrangers to their Neighbours, or at leaſt, there is no Acquaintance with them as they are Chriſtians. They are nothing concern'd with one another, in the things of Religion. And if they are reproved, they Anſwer to the Reprover, That he is nothing concern'd with them; which they could not do, if they communicated together at the Bleſſed Sacrament. There is a great Complaint of Unworthy Communicants (and I hope it is greater than there is cauſe for): But what a fearful Cauſe is there, to complain of the Unworthineſs, and of the horrid and ſhameful Wickedneſſes of Non-Communicants?

The conſequence of Non-Communicating, may alſo come under a more ſpecial Conſideration. There are Thouſands

ſands that are not openly ſcandalous and profane, whoſe Condition would not be ſo bad as it is, if they frequented the Sacrament. There would not be ſo much Guilt and Trouble in their Minds when they are in health, nor ſo much Fear and Diſquietment when ſickneſs comes. This is a plain caſe, & almoſt every days experience proves the truth of it. Let every Man who lives in any known Sin, examine his own Mind, Whether, if he were under a Neceſſity of Receiving the Sacrament, he would not be more afraid to commit *that* Sin; whether he would not be more afraid to neglect his Duty to God, both in publick and private? And when he hath Received after a ſolemn and devout manner, and know that he muſt ſhortly renew his Engagement to God again; He would not be more careful of his ways? I know there are a great many who are afraid to come to the Sacrament; but if they Examine themſelves, and ſeriouſly conſider the ſtate of their own Minds,

Minds, they will have cauſe to conclude, That it is from a ſuggeſtion of the Devil, and that he makes them afraid to Receive, that they might be the leſs afraid to ſin. He may be Unworthy who does Receive, he may be one that lives a ſinful Life; but we may have much more cauſe to think him Unworthy and in a ſinful ſtate, who Receives not at all.

There is likewiſe a very dreadful Conſequence, in reſpect of Grief and Sorrow, when the Non-Communicant is ſick, and forc'd to look back upon his former Life; which I have had ſuch frequent occaſion to take notice of, that I viſit the Sick with ſome kind of Fear, leſt I ſhould find their Neglect of the Sacrament tormenting their Conſciences. I never yet heard any ſay, I wiſh I had never received the Sacrament; although in ſome caſes, as I ſhall ſhew, there may be cauſe for Perſons to wiſh ſo. But, that Men and Women have not Received, is the Torment of their Departing Souls; be-

becauſe then their guilty Minds tell them, That they ought to have receiv'd it, and might have done it to their great Benefit and Advantage. I lately heard this Expreſſion from a Sick Bed, which I mention becauſe I think very uſeful. 'As for the Sacrament, I was afraid in my health 'to receive it, but I think if I had 'received it, I ſhould have been more 'careful of my ways than I have been. We do for the moſt part find, that Perſons are Comforted or Tormented upon their Sick Beds, according to their Communicating or Non-Communicating in the time of their healths. I know not which is more rare, in viſiting the Sick, to find a Communicant troubled in mind, or a Non-Communicant that is not.

There is another Dreadful Evil, which is the conſequence of Non-Communicating, (which I might have mentioned under the former Head) and that is, moſt groſs and ſcandalous Ignorance. There never was any Age, in

in which there were Miniſters more able to inſtruct the People, and it is well known, their way of Preaching the Goſpel, is moſt plain and intelligible to the meaneſt Capacities. And yet *The People periſh for want of Knowledge*. In many places, by reaſon of the vaſt Number of Inhabitants, it is impoſſible there can be a particular care of their Souls by Converſe with them in private, which is of great neceſſity and Benefit; and there are a great many who would not endure it, but take occaſion to run from the Church. In the mean while, there are Thouſands who have lived long enough to be *Teachers of others*, but had need themſelves to be taught *which are the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God*; Men that can give no Account of their Faith, nor upon what Account it is that they expect Salvation. And I am ſure one great cauſe of this, hath been Neglect of Receiving the Lord's Supper. For if Men were frequent Communicants, they would be under

a great Neceſſity and Obligation to enquire after Truth, that they might underſtand, at leaſt, the Principles of their Religion. They would be ſenſible of their Ignorance, and come to their Miniſter, or converſe with other Communicants, concerning the things of God and of Religion. The Sacrament would be a Means, by which they would *grow in Grace and Knowledge*. But whilſt they are only concerned to come ſometimes to the houſe of God, and think that it is enough that they have been there, tho' they neither know nor practice more than they did before; and neglect that ſolemn Inſtitution, which would make them more deeply concerned in the things of Religion: They remain moſt groſly Ignorant. I do not think that any Man will ſay, That frequent Communicants are as ignorant as thoſe are, that never come to the Sacrament.

By this time I hope I have ſufficiently proved my Aſſertion, *viz.* That there

there is generally more danger in Unworthy Neglecting, than there is in Unworthy Receiving; and therefore the Sinner is not ſecure, (unleſs it be in his Sin) who turns his back upon this Ordinance, from a ſuppoſition that he avoids danger, or that of two Evils he doth chooſe the leaſt: Yet I am not willing to paſs to another head of Diſcourſe, till I have earneſtly intreated all Perſons, that they would not make an ill Uſe of what I have ſaid. As the Apoſtle never intended, by telling the *Corinthians* the danger of Unworthy Receiving, that any ſhould abſent from the Sacrament; So, far be it from me to deſign, by ſhewing the danger of Unworthy Neglecting, that any ſhould come unworthily to Receive it. There is no need, nor any Reaſon, for ſuch an ill Inference to be made from it. Beſides, I have only aſſerted that it is Generally more dangerous. I do not ſay that it is ſo in every Particular Caſe. It may be there are ſome who come to the

Sacrament on purpoſe to carry on wicked Deſigns, that they may be accounted, not only Upright towards Men, but likewiſe Religious towards God. 'Tis poſſible, there may be ſome who come to the Sacrament, that they may covertly carry on Treaſonable and Rebellious Deſigns; but I am loath to ſuppoſe that there are any ſuch who are no Friends to Popery. If there be, it had been well for thoſe *Judas's* that they had never been born, and it would be well for the World too, if a *Mill-ſtone were hanged about their Necks, and they were caſt into the Sea.* Or it may be there are ſome who come to the Sacrament, that they might be thought fit to be intruſted with the Concerns of Others, and in the mean while intend to cheat them. No Man can think, but it had been better for ſuch Men, if they had never come to the Holy Ordinance. Whether their Deſigns be againſt publick or private Perſons, (tho' the firſt is the moſt dreadful Caſe) it was not Chriſt and his Com-

Commands, but the Devil and his Inſtigations that brought them to the Sacrament, and from him they muſt expect their Reward in the place of Torments.

There is (beſides open Debaucheries) another particular caſe, which renders the condition of Men ſo bad, and is in ſome, the occaſion of ſo great a ſcandal to Religion, and to the Holy Ordinance, that I will not ſay but it had been better if thoſe that are Communicants, had never been ſo; And that is, That Men ſhould receive the Sacrament, only for the ſake of their Employments, and that they may keep places of Truſt, which are profitable and beneficial to them. Chriſtians are to receive the Sacrament, becauſe it is an Ordinance which Chriſt commanded; but theſe receive it not upon any ſuch Account. So long as it was only the command of Chriſt, they regarded it not; but when it became the command of the King, they made haſt to it.

Chriſtians are to receive the Sacra-

ment for the good of their immortal Souls, that having begun a Religious Life, they may grow in Grace, and be more and more confirm'd and ſtrengthned in the ways of Religion and Godlineſs. But this is none of their Buſineſs: Theſe Men come to the Sacramen, about a Buſineſs in which their Souls are nothing concerned. (And well it were for them, if their Souls could be nothing concerned in it.) He that will be a Worthy Communicant, muſt examine himſelf, whether he can be content to forſake the World, and all the Enjoyments in it for the ſake of Religion. He is a Worthy Communicant indeed, who is ſatisfied, that the Love he hath for his Saviour, is ſuch, that he had rather quit the World, and all the Enjoyments of it, than live without this Ordinance. But this Man, upon Examination of himſelf, finds, that inſtead of being willing to forſake the World, for the Love he hath to the Sacrament, he could be very well content to forſake the Sacrament, if it were

were not for the regard that he hath to the World.

If, when Men are under a Neceſſity of receiving the Sacrament, that they may continue in Places of Profit as well as Truſt, they take this opportunity to Examine their owns Minds, Whether they are in the number of thoſe that fear God, and ſincerely mind the things of Religion, and find that they might have been Worthy Receivers, and that it hath been their great Fault, that they lived in the Neglect of the Sacrament, which hath been the caſe of many. Or if upon Examination, they find, that they are impenitent Sinners, that have allowed themſelves in Sins, either of Commiſſion or Omiſſion, and do reſolve, that for the time to come, *Sin ſhall not have Dominion over* them, but they will every day Pray to God in their *Cloſets*, which our Saviour requires every one of his Diſciples to do; and that they will attend the Prayers of the Church with Devotion, and the

Reading and Preaching of the Word with honeſt Hearts. If they are truly penitent for their former ſins, and reſolve to avoid the Occaſions of Evil for the time to come: If, in order to theſe things they go to their own Miniſter, or to ſome other, whom they may think more fit to give them Advice (which the Church allows, becauſe it is a very tender caſe); And if they reſolve that they will be frequent Communicants for the time to come, They may then bleſs God for that happy occaſion of bringing them to the Sacrament. But if Men are Communicants, only for the ſake of worldly Profits, I will not ſay, but it had been a leſs evil to have lived in the Neglect of it; it being a great Affront to our Bleſſed Saviour, to come to his Supper only for the ſake of this World; a great Contempt of the Ordinance, and of very ill conſequence to others, who will by ſuch Examples be brought to a very low Eſteem of the holy Ordinance.

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But may it not be Objected, That it is therefore a very grievous thing, that the Sacrament ſhould be impoſed? Is it not that which tends to the Diſhonour of Religion, and the Prejudice of Mens Souls?

Anſ. I know this is Objected, and there is a fearful ſtir about it, amongſt Men of diſcontented ſpirits, who cry, "What have Governours to do to de-"prive me of the Liberty of Receiv-"ing *then*, and *then* only, when I "find my ſelf moſt fit for it? Why "ſhould it be required, that All ſhould "come to the Sacrament, when it is "not to be imagin'd, but moſt are un-"fit for it? Can it be ſuppoſed, that "All Men have true Grace in them? "Do All belong to the Election of "Grace? Theſe and ſuch like Que-ſtions we meet withal. But I do earneſtly deſire the Reader, to conſider in the firſt place, who they are that are thus offended. I have known none, or very few, but thoſe who receive

not at all, who make this Cavil. And the Truth is, there is more Reaſon, why we ſhould pity and pray to God for them, than that we ſhould otherwiſe regard what they ſay. They have two very pernicious Deſigns in it; one is to indulge their Luſts, which make them afraid to receive the Sacrament, any where; the other is, to do Miſchief to the Church; for they do thereby endeavour to exaſperate others againſt a lawful Command, that they might ſeparate from her Communion.

That the King may command his Subjects to receive the Sacrament, is ſo reaſonable, that I wonder any ſhould offer to Object againſt it: I ſhould think him very Arrogant, who ſhould ſay, that although Chriſt ſaid, *This Do*, yet Chriſtian Kings and Princes are not at all concern'd to ſee it done: That although Kings under the Old Teſtament-Diſpenſation, were favoured or rejected of God, according to their care, that the People ſhould obſerve the Ordinances of God, or their Neg-

Neglect in that great concern; yet under the New Teſtament-Diſpenſation, Kings are not to be concern'd, whether the Ordinances of Chriſt be obſerved, but are to leave every one to their Liberty. I could almoſt as well ſay, that *Conſtantine* was to blame for ſettling Chriſtianity in his Dominions by a Law, as that Chriſtian Kings in ſucceeding Ages are to blame for taking care, that the Ordinances of that Religion ſhould be duly obſerved. If any ſay that the King muſt then command the receiving it after the manner that our Saviour preſcribed; I Anſwer, That that Objection will onely ſerve to throw the Ordinance out of the World; for neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles preſcribed any way. But more of this under another Head.

As to what is ſaid concerning the Qualification of Perſons, That all have not the Grace of God, all are not of the Number of the Elect, *&c.* I ſhall give no other Anſwer but this: When there comes a Man to me and tells me, that

that he is required to receive the Sacrament, and in order to it, he hath ſtriven againſt his Luſts with his utmoſt diligence: He hath implored the Grace and Holy Spirit of God with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and yet he is forced to continue under the power of his ſin, and muſt Eat and Drink his own Damnation: I will then conclude, that the Objection is of great force; but till then, I wiſh that all Perſons would take care of paſſing ſuch a Conſtruction of Obſcure Places of Scripture, as ſhall make them contradict the plaineſt Expreſſions of it, and the Experience of every Man that comes into the World.

This Objection being Anſwered, (for the ſake of which I have made an unwonted Digreſſion) let me deſire every one, who is required to receive the Sacrament, as a Teſt to prove that he fears God, and is fit to be entruſted, take heed that what I have ſaid concerning the great Danger of Unworthy Neglecting, do not encourage him

him to go to the Sacrament without due Examination and Preparation for it. I would be very loath to be the occaſion of his Death-bed Anguiſh of Mind, when his departing ſoul ſhall be full of Horrour, to think that he is going hence, and muſt appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Him whom he regarded not, but for the ſake of this preſent World.

It muſt likewiſe be conſidered, that I have been ſpeaking of thoſe who live in the Neglect of the Sacrament, and not of thoſe who ſeldom Communicate. I know it is the great fault of Chriſtians in this Age, that they do not Communicate ſo often, as the Reverence which is due to the Ordinance, and the Neceſſity of their ſouls, do require. But their Fault is not to be compared to the fault of thoſe who live in the continued Neglect of it. I have no deſign to extenuate the danger of Unworthy Receiving in any: For although I have, I hope, made it appear, that the danger of Unworthy Refuſing

the

the Sacrament is the greateſt; Yet when I conſider what a fearful thing it is for ſinners, who do not fear God, and ſavour the things of Religion, to come as the true Diſciples of Chriſt, to this Ordinance; I ſcarce know how to ſay that their danger is leſs. Let not therefore an ill uſe be made of what I have ſaid, but let every one conclude, having often heard the danger of Unworthy Receiving, and now read the danger of Unworthy Neglecting: That the Sacrament is a great and ſolemn Ordinance, which lies in the ſinners way, to ſtop him in his *broad way that leadeth to deſtruction*, and is a great Argument to him to enter into *the Path of Life*. For it is on one hand a dreadful thing, that the Children and Servants of the Devil, who yield Obedience to him, ſhould come to the Lord's Supper, amongſt thoſe that are the Children and Servants of God, as if they could come undiſcovered to the All-ſeeing God: That thoſe whom Chriſt calls *his Enemies*,

mies, becauſe they *will not ſuffer him to rule over them*, ſhould come as if they were his Friends and Subjects; And on the other hand, for Men to turn their backs upon this Ordinance for the ſake of their ſins, and thereby to throw away the great Inſtitution of him from whom they declare that they expect ſalvation; This admits of greater aggravations. Let every one therefore reſolve, that he will avoid *both* theſe Rocks, by betaking himſelf to the ſincere practice of Religion, and by frequenting this Holy Ordinance, by which he will enjoy great pleaſure and ſatisfaction to his Mind in this world, and obtain good aſſurance of everlaſting glory and happineſs in the World to come.

IV. The Non-Communicant is Unworthy in that he doth not only caſt Contempt upon the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, but upon the Sacrament of Baptiſm likewiſe, and ſo both the poſitive Inſtitutions of our Saviour are

inſignificant and of no account to him.

The two Sacraments have a ſpecial relation to each other. The Lords Supper is a high priviledge which Chriſtians have valued above their lives. It is the Souls *Feaſt of Fat Things*. It is that Spiritual Banquet with which our Saviour entertains thoſe who are dearer, than his Life was to Him. Baptiſm is the Ordinance which opens the door and lets us in to the Banquetting-houſe: None but thoſe who are Baptized are to be admitted to the Lords Supper. If then the Non-Communicant regards not the Lords Supper, he doth not regard but ſlights his Baptiſm, at leaſt, ſo far as it hath relation to it. He that ſlights the Feaſt, muſt needs ſlight that which gives Admiſſion to it. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a renewing of that Covenant which we made with God in our Baptiſm; and is not only a renewed Engagement on our parts, to *Believe in God, and to Serve him*, but on Gods part likewiſe by which he Seals to us the

the forgiveneſs of our Sins, that we are *his Children and Heirs of Eternal Life.* If we care not for renewing this Covenant, it is a ſign that we value not the firſt Agreement that we made with God in our Baptiſm. Beſides, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a great means for our obtaining Grace to enable us to keep the Covenant of our Baptiſm. If we come not to it, 'tis a ſign that we have no mind to perform what we promiſed, which of our ſelves we are not able to perform.

Were it not a little beſides my preſent purpoſe, I could eaſily ſhew, that thoſe who are Non-Communicants, if they had not been Baptized in their Infancies, would never have received that Ordinance. No adult perſon can be admitted into the Church of Chriſt by that Ordinance, who doth not own the Faith, and ſolemnly engage to live as becomes the Goſpel. And thoſe that perform this which Baptiſm engages men to, are Worthy Communicants.

If

If we ask the Non-Communicant how he came to be called a Chriſtian, he muſt ſay, 'My Father made me ſo 'when I knew not what was done, and 'he or others promiſed that which I 'never intend to perform.

I would argue thus with the Non-Communicant. Either you own your Baptiſm or you do not: If you do not, why do you not declare it? Why do you call your ſelf a Chriſtian, and profeſs that you expect Salvation from him, who appointed that Ordinance to all that expect to enter into the Kingdom of God? If you do own your Baptiſm, why do you not take care to perform that reaſonable and neceſſary Engagement which you made in it, by going to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper for ſtrength and power to perform it?

But I had rather make another digreſſion, which I hope the Reader will excuſe, conſidering that it may tend to the ſatisfaction of many who are in doubt concerning Baptiſm, as it is now gene-

generally uſed in the Church of Chriſt, As there are a great many whoſe practices ſhew, that they make no great account of their Baptiſm, ſo there are a great many whoſe principles are utterly againſt it, and eſpecially againſt Infant-Baptiſm. And in regard that the practice of the Church depends more upon Grounds and Reaſons from Scripture, than from any Expreſs Inſtances in it; and there are ſome places which ſeem, to ſome, rather to ſpeak againſt it than for it, and to diſallow of it rather than to commend the practice of it; I ſhall for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who encline to the Anabaptiſts, and are willing to be ſatisfied (ſuch as have not taken up an Opinion, and are reſolved to ſtick to it what ever any ſay againſt it; which is the great Cauſe of all Errours) lay down theſe following Aſſertions, which I deſire all ſuch perſons ſoberly, and with humble and modeſt, and not with haughty and ſtubborn minds, to conſider:

1. Children were members of the

Jewiſh Church as well as Adult perſons, and there was an Ordinance appointed for them which was their great Priviledge: And it is not to be imagined that our Saviour, who *took little Children up in his Arms and Bleſſed them*, ſhould allow no Ordinance for them by which they ſhould be admitted into *His* Church.

Whereſoever God entred into Covenant with the Parent, he entred into Covenant likewiſe with the Children of that Parent, that is, the Children were included in the Covenant, and the Bleſſing of that Covenant belonged to the Children as well as to the Parent.

2. Our Saviour took this Ordinance of Baptiſm from the Cuſtom of the Jews, who were wont to Baptize thoſe who forſook Heatheniſm and embraced the true Religion: And whenſoever they made Proſelites, they did not only Baptize the Parent, but the Child likewiſe, upon engagement that the Child ſhould be brought up in the ſame Religion: So that it was not neceſſary, that

that our Saviour ſhould give an Inſtance of that which every one to whom he came knew was practiſed. But it was neceſſary that he ſhould have declared his Exceptions againſt Infants Baptiſm if he intended their excluſion.

To what purpoſe ſhould our Saviour declare, that Infants ſhould have the Seal of a Covenant, when 'twas never otherwiſe? Or, how can we imagine, that our Saviour ſent to Baptize Nations in which Infants had been commonly Baptized before, and yet intended that they ſhould be excluded? If indeed our Saviour had declared that Infants ſhould not be Baptized: Or if we had read of the Apoſtles refuſal of them: Or if there had been no Infants Baptized before, nor any Ordinance for Infants; the Anabaptiſts opinion had been built upon a good Foundation*, but otherwiſe it is very weak.

3. As a Conſequent of this, Infants

* *Vid.* Dr. *Patricks* Aqua Genitalis: *And* Dr. *Lightfoots* 2d. Vol. p. 118.

were all along Baptized in the Primitive Church, by the Holy Martyrs that ſuffer'd for Chriſtianity, of which thoſe who writ againſt the *Anabaptiſts* have given undeniable Proof. And we are ſure, that if our Saviour had intended their Excluſion, they would never have done it. And it is not to be imagin'd, that *Anabaptiſts* know better what was the Mind of Chriſt, than thoſe Chriſtians did. If thoſe who are now of that Perſwaſion, had lived in thoſe days, and had conſider'd from whence our Saviour took that Ordinance, with the Grounds and Reaſons of it, they could not have been of that Opinion, which they have now eſpouſed; becauſe then the Original of it was freſh in the World, and the Uſe and Practice of it was continued by the moſt Holy Men in the World. It is not only great Haughtineſs of Mind, by which Men think themſelves Wiſer than the moſt Holy and Learned Men in all Ages of the World, but Ignorance thro' length of Time, that makes an

Anabaptiſt. 4. In-

4. Infants are Believers in a ſence, or elſe they could not be ſaved, nor have any Right to the Promiſes of Chriſt in the Goſpel. And if they are in any ſence ſuch Believers as are entituled to Salvation, they are ſuch Believers as have a Right to Baptiſm. If the Eſtate belongs to a Child in the Cradle, the Indentures and Seals of that Eſtate belong to him likewiſe: The Child of a Believer, may as well be called a Believer, as the Child of a Proſelite was called a Proſelite. If God gives Children but the Denomination of Believers, it is ſufficient to entitle them to Baptiſm.

5. Thoſe that conſider the Caſe of the *Anabaptiſts*, muſt needs be of another Opinion. This in Conjunction with the former Arguments, muſt needs be of great force to thoſe that are ſerious and conſiderate, and not conceited and reſolute in a caſe which they have eſpouſed.

As the Condition of the *Jews* is a living Argument of the Truth of Chriſtianity,

ſtianity, and the badneſs of their caſe: So I may ſay, that the Condition of the *Anabaptiſts* and their Unſucceſsfulneſs in all their Attempts to eſtabliſh their Opinions, doth ſhew, that God doth not, nor ever did ſhew any ſuch Favour to them, as might give any ſober Perſon cauſe to think that they were Gods Church and People, however they plead His Word to be their Rule; but that Infant-Baptiſm is an Ordinance which God allows of, and hath countenanced ever ſince there was any Oppoſition made to it.

There is a Writer yet alive, who gives a large and ſtrange Account of the miſchievous Practices of the *Anabaptiſts* in *Germany*, and other Places, what Diſturbers and not Promoters of Religion they have been, whereſoever they have come. But I wave all that can be ſaid againſt them, either in this Nation or beyond the Seas, and will only ſay, That if I had the higheſt Opinion of them for their Morals, that I have for any ſort in the World, yet

I could never believe, That all the Primitive Chriſtians, who owned and practiſed Infant-Baptiſm, and the Martyrs in all Ages, were not Members rightly admitted into the Church of Chriſt; That not only the Papiſts, but all the Reformed Churches in the World, are miſtaken in this Point; and that the *Anabaptiſts* are the only True and Rightful Members of Chriſts Body. He muſt be very weak and notoriouſly partial, who conſiders theſe Things, and doth not Conclude, that they are a Sect that ſeparate from the True Church which God hath owned in all Ages, and not the True Viſible Church of Chriſt. This I thought fit to mention in Conjunction with other Arguments, by which many wavering minds have been eſtabliſhed in the Truth; and God grant there may be the like ſucceſs to thoſe in the like caſe, who ſhall read them.

V. Thoſe Excuſes which Men generally make for their not Receiving, are ſo far from Juſtifying their Neg-

lect, that they do not ſo much as extenuate it: Nay, they exceedingly aggravate the Guilt of the Non-Communicant. The Truth is, no Excuſes muſt be made in ſuch a weighty matter as the Sacrament is. There may be Interruptions, but there muſt be no Excuſes. An Interruption is when a Man really intends to receive the Sacrament, but ſomewhat happens by which he is prevented, and it is a great Trouble to his Mind that he is ſo. It is with Chriſtians in this Caſe, as it was with thoſe *Iſraelites* which we read of *Numb.* 9. 6, 7. who being hindred from eating the *Paſſover* by the legal defilement of a Dead Corps, were extreamly troubled, and came to *Moſes*, to know what they ſhould do. *There were certain Men who were defiled by the dead Body of a Man, that they could not keep the Paſſover on that day: and they came before* Moſes *and before* Aaron *on that day; And thoſe Men ſaid unto him, we are defiled by the dead body of a Man: wherefore are we kept back that*

we

we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed Season, among the Children of Israel. Obſerve how far thoſe Men were from making Excuſes for neglecting God's Ordinance, in that they were extreamly troubled at an interruption which probably they could not help; for he that was in a Tent, in which a Man dyed, or came into it, was unclean, *Chap.* 19. 14. and continued ſo *Seven days.* This being of great Moment, *Moſes ſaid unto them, ſtand ſtill and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.* And we read that God in that Caſe appointed that they ſhould keep the *Paſſover* the next *Month.* God allowed of the Interruption for that time, but there muſt be no Excuſe. We read *Num.* 9. 13. that the man who was not thus hindred, if he did not keep the *Paſſover* at the time appointed, *The ſame ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people, becauſe he brought not the Offering of the Lord in his appointed Season.* A place of Scripture very fit for Non-Communicants to con-

conſider, who if they have no Impediments will make Excuſes inſtead of them, and will pretend ſomewhat to be the cauſe of their Neglect which is not really ſo; but the little regard which they have for the Ordinances of their Religion is the cauſe of their neglect. I ſhall firſt conſider what the general Excuſes are, and then conſider ſome more ſpecial Caſes.

I. Some pretend that the Solemnity of the Ordinance is the cauſe of their Neglect: It is a very great Ordinance, and they durſt not adventure to make their approach to it. I know that there are ſome very good Chriſtians to whom this is not an excuſe, but is a real Cauſe of their abſenting from the Sacrament. They think that it is too great an Adventure for ſuch as they are, to come to their Lords Supper, although they are ſuch as ſincerely love him, and endeavour to keep his Commandments. What I have already ſaid, may give ſatisfaction in this Caſe, *viz.* That an humble ſenſe of Unworthineſs is a good qua-

qualification for a Communicant; and that as the Sacrament is a great and ſolemn Ordinance, ſo it is a very great Duty to partake of it; and therefore Chriſtians muſt take care that they do not complement our Saviour, but that they examine themſelves, and reverently obſerve his inſtitution. Great men do ſometimes allow of *Such* excuſes when they make invitations, but the Great God commands when he invites, and there can be no Neglect but it is a great ſin, as I have already ſhewed.

But my chief deſign is to ſpeak of thoſe who make this a pretence for their Non-Communicating. They ſay the Sacrament is a ſolemn Ordinance, and therefore they dare not come to it. But I would have them to conſider, *whither* they go when they turn away from it. If it be to a continuance in a ſinful courſe of Life, their condition is unſpeakably miſerable. What an affront is this to the great God and our Bleſſed Saviour? I may ſay to them as the Apoſtle to the *Galatians*, *Be not deceived God*

God is not mocked. The beſt that can be ſaid, is; That you do very reverently mock Chriſt and his Ordinance: You are afraid to come to ſuch a ſolemn Ordinance, and you are not fit for it, and therefore you had rather chooſe to live in the breach of his Commandment, which you find your ſelves more fit for: This is *Hail Maſter:* This is to Crucifie Chriſt from a Reverent reſpect to him. And as he is guilty of great Contempt of God under a pretence of Reverence to him, ſo he is guilty of moſt prodigious Folly. *O fooliſh* Non-Communicants *who have bewitched you,* that you ſhould think to avoid danger by neglecting a great and ſolemn Duty; that you ſhould turn from the Sacrament to the commiſſion of ſin *to avoid Damnation!* The Scripture ſaith, *He that committeth ſin is of the Devil.* The Non-Communicant abſents from the Ordinance of Chriſt, and goes to the ſervice of the Devil to avoid *Damnation!*

All men ſhould conſider, that the ſolem-

ſolemnity of the Ordinance is as well a great reaſon why men ſhould partake, as it is why they ſhould prepare; becauſe it is an Argument that God expects the Obſervance of it, and that his heart is the more ſet upon it. When ſervants are negligent of their Duty, they hope to come off beſt by neglecting that which they think to be of leaſt moment. No man ever ſaid, I omitted my Duty, and I hope to be excuſed becauſe it was a great Command, and I was required to take great care in the Obſervance of it. Let not any therefore think, that the ſolemnity of the Ordinance will be their excuſe for not obſerving it, but their great Condemnation.

II. A ſecond pretence, which is a conſequent of the former is, That Men are not prepared for it, and therefore they had better let it alone. I earneſtly deſire ſuch perſons to conſider that,

1. This can be no Plea, becauſe they may be prepared if they pleaſe. I know

know that there are a great many who would charge the ſin of Non-Communicating upon Almighty God, pretending that he muſt prepare them for it; or elſe they cannot receive worthily. But let me tell the ſinner, that his Contempt of God which brings *deſtruction* to him, is *of himſelf*. Though no man can be prepared without the grace of God and the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, yet this is not the Cauſe of his being unprepared, for God hath promiſed his *Holy Spirit to them that ask it*. And the Experience of every ſinner, who is not ſtrangely hardned in his impiety, tells him that in this he doth exceedingly provoke God; becauſe he knows that God is ſo farr from being wanting to him, that he doth ſecretly ſollicit him to prepare, that he may worthily partake, and he will not. That ſinner is in a very evil condition, who charges God of requiring that of him which he can by no means perform.

2. Your not being Prepared is of it ſelf

ſelf a ſin, and therefore it muſt not be pleaded for a neglect of your Duty. This is to excuſe one ſin with another. It is as well a Duty to prepare as to partake, and the Neglect of it is a ſin which God doth as ſurely puniſh, Luke 12. 47. *That Servant that knew his Lords will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* The man in the Goſpel that came to the Feaſt *without the Wedding Garment* was *Speechleſs.* No man muſt plead Unpreparedneſs; becauſe he may be prepared, and it is his ſin if he be not.

3. This is is a meer Deluſion of the Devil, by which he would keep men ſecure in their ſins. This is not an Unpreparedneſs which brings grief and trouble to the mind, as it ought to do; but it is a *contented* Unpreparedneſs. *The People love to have it ſo.* He that ſearcheth the heart knows that the Language there, is, I have no mind to be prepared; and *that* renders the condition of the Non-Communicant to be very dreadful.

4. This

4. This Pretence is endleſs. Art thou Unprepared, when will it be otherwiſe? The longer that any one Neglects the Sacrament, the more Unprepared he is for it. There are many, who when they were young pleaded they were not prepared, are prepared now! but it is to ſcoff at Religion, and to contemn all that is Holy. And thoſe that are not openly Prophane are more unprepared than they were, by an encreaſe of the Love of the World, and the fixing of Evil Habits. The Sacrament is an Ordinance which comes to pluck up Sin at the Roots, and if that be kept off, Sin muſt needs grow apace. He that being deſired to receive the Sacrament pleads that he is Unprepared, may as well ſay that he never intends to receive, for he is more Unprepared now than he was formerly, and is like to be more Unprepared afterwards than he is now.

But it may be ſome will plead, That though every one may prepare, and it is his Duty ſo to do, and his Sin if he do

do not; yet the caſe of many is ſuch that they cannot find Time to prepare: There had need be ſome dayes ſet a part on purpoſe for Preparation: What ſhall Servants do that work all the week from Morning till Night, and have ſcarcely time enough for the neceſſary ſupports of Nature, that are forced to riſe early and go to Bed Late? And what ſhall thoſe do that have nothing but from hand to mouth? muſt they, by preparing ſuffer their Families to want? To this I muſt anſwer; that every man hath or may have Time enough to prepare without any prejudice to his Worldly affairs; though the Servant doth not ſteal time from his Maſter, nor the poor man from the neceſſities of his Family, if we conſider:

1. That which beſpeaks a man to be a Worthy Communicant, is not ſo much his particular Acts of Piety and Devotion, as the general Habit and Bent of his Mind. The great Queſtion is, whether a man really fears God,

and whether he be Spiritually minded. He that lives in known ſins without Repentance and Amendment of Life, and intends to continue ſo, cannot be prepared for the Sacrament, though he ſpends never ſo much time in Religious Duties; becauſe he himſelf is not Religious. If any ſuch man ſhould for many Days and Weeks abſtain from Sinful Acts which he hath been Guilty of, and if he ſhould ſpend as much time in Religious Services both publick and private as preparatory to the Sacrament, without Reſolution to amend, it would not render him a Worthy Communicant. This were but for a Child of the Devil to dreſs himſelf in the counterfeit habit of Gods Children, and then to return to his Father again. This is a moſt certain Truth; He that is Religious and Fears God in the General courſe of his Life, is more fit to receive the Sacrament without any ſpecial Preparation for it, than the other can be, how much time ſoever he ſets apart in Order to his Receiving.

ceiving. His coming to the Sacrament would not be like the Diſciples of our Lord who had left all to follow him, and did by this Ordinance engage themſelves to live and dye in the Faith, and in Obedience to his Commandments; but like the Whore which *Solomon* ſpeaks of, who ſaid, *I have paid my Vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee*, &c. Prov. 7. 14, 15. Some are ſo diſſolute as to think, that having Received the Sacrament, and ſpent ſome time to put themſelves into a good mood in Order to it, they ſhall eaſily obtain a Pardon for the time to come, having made even with God for the time paſt. But as the Whore was a Whore ſtill for all her Vows, ſo this Wicked man remains a Wicked man ſtill, notwithſtanding his Preparation and Communicating, *And his Sacrifice* was *an Abomination to the Lord.* It is not enough for a man to ſay, I muſt not ſin this week, but avoid Temptations, becauſe I intend to Receive the Sacrament; but I muſt change the habit of Mind, I muſt

become a New Creature, I muſt reſolve, that becauſe *I have done Iniquity, I will do no more*, or elſe all the Preparation that can be made may ſignify nothing. There is a great difference in the Deſign of theſe Communicants. He that is Religious in the General courſe of his Life, comes to the Sacrament that he may be kept from ſin for the time to come. He that is only Religious in Order to his Receiving, comes to it that he may ſin again with leſs regret of mind than he did before. The Firſt is one who deſires that Chriſt may dwell in his heart, and bear rule in him: The Other is one of thoſe who now and then gives God an un-wellcome Viſit, and then returns to dwell with his ſins again. He muſt needs be an Unworthy Communicant, that comes to the Sacrament that he may with the greater freedom ſerve his ſin after it. Tis not any particular Preparation, how much time ſoever any one hath for it, that beſpeaks a man to be a Worthy Communicant, if he be not heartily reſolv'd

ſolv'd to become a good man.

2. There is no Time prefixed for preparation, but men are left to the grace of the Goſpel and of the New-Covenant. We read in the Old Teſtament of a ſpecial Time which God appointed for Preparation, when the People were to make their ſolemn approaches to him. When God appointed the People to meet him upon the Mount he required two Dayes preparation, *Exod.* 19. 15. When God ſent a Summons to the Seventy Elders to appear before him, he required a Dayes preparation. *Say unto the People, Sanctifie your ſelves againſt to Morrow*; and more Inſtances might be given. But under the Goſpel God accepts the Will for the deed. He that would ſpend time if it were his own, in a ſolemn Preparation, is as welcome to God as if he had really ſpent *ſo much* time in order to his Receiving. Where Time is wanting, there may be, and doubtleſs is a ſupply from the grace of God. *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 16. 1. *The preparation of the heart*

is from the Lord. And it is not to be doubted, but through the Grace of God, thoſe who have but little time to prepare, do receive as much to their comfort, and find as great benefit by it as thoſe who have ſpent more time in Preparation for it.

I know that ſome very Pious Miniſters have ſo much inſiſted upon the ſpending of ſome conſiderable Time as preparatory to the Sacrament, that they have diſcouraged many good Chriſtians from coming to it, who have not had time from their unavoidable Occaſions, to prepare themſelves for it. I will readily grant, that it is of great Concern, that thoſe who intend to Communicate ſhould ſpend time in preparing themſelves, and the more they ſpend the more comfort and ſatisfaction it is to them: But this muſt not diſcourage Servants & others who want time, and whoſe time is not properly their own. The Scripture hath given no ſtandard in this caſe; and from thence it is that ſome very pious Chriſtians, from an humble

humble ſenſe of their Unworthyneſs and Unfitneſs to receive, think they have not ſpent Time enough in preparing, and therefore they will ſtay till the next Communion; and when that comes they ſtill think they have not ſpent Time enough; and by this means the moſt worthy gueſts are kept from the Lords Supper. I would have ſuch perſons, and all that are pious and devout Chriſtians, to conſider the caſe of the *Corinthians* before mentioned. They had received Unworthily, and thereby provoked God to Anger: The Apoſtle admoniſhes them to *Examine* themſelves before they received again, but he doth not preſcribe any Time that they ſhould ſpend, nor doth he tell them that it would be convenient for them to forbear coming to the Sacrament for ſome time; But *let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*; when 'tis probable there was to be a Communion the next day.

3. It is poſſible that men in this caſe

of Preparation may be over Righteous, nay it is poſſible they may be Superſtitious too. They are over-Righteous who ſpend that time in preparation, which they cannot ſpare from neceſſary Occaſions. If the Poor man neglects his Family, or the Servant his Maſters buſineſs, though it be for the ſake of the Sacrament; God may ſay to them, *who hath required this at your Hands?*

Some may be Superſtitious in their Preparations: Such as think they ſhall be accepted of God according to the number of Meals which they have abſtained from; or the Hours they have ſpent in Reading, Prayer or Meditation. Whereas, as to the firſt, Abſtinence in it ſelf ſignifies nothing. It is only to be uſed ſo far as it may keep the mind from being indiſpoſed for that which is good. And the Conſtitutions of ſome cannot bear Faſting, but are more indiſpoſed by it than if they continue their wonted Meals. And by numbring the Hours or Prayers (as Papiſts do) a man may place Religion wrong, and

all

all that he doth may be without that Devotion of mind, which alone is acceptable to God, and preparatory to this holy Ordinance.

Let men take heed that they miſtake not by ſetting bounds and meaſures where God hath ſet none. Let them not think, that unleſs they had ſo much Time for preparation, God will not accept of them, for God hath made no ſuch appointments. 'Tis not Time allowed that is of abſolute neceſſity, but a ſincere deſire and endeavour to obey the commands of our Saviour that makes a man a worthy Communicant.

4. Let him that complains of the want of Time take heed, that he doth not neglect that time he hath or may have to ſpend in preparing himſelf. What man is there in the world, who, for ſome additional advantages, would not find time to ſpare from his neceſſary occaſions? There are many who will work harder than ordinary for the ſake of a little Liberty: Others to gain ſome Profit and Advantage to themſelves.

ſelves. Surely ſuch perſons, if they have a deſire to walk in the *Pleaſant* wayes of Religion, may make haſt to diſpatch their buſineſs, that they may have a little time to Examine, and bethink themſelves of the ſtate of their minds, & how the great affairs ſtand between God and their own Souls. They may find time to conſider what Sins they have to Repent of, and heartily to beg Gods grace, that they may eſcape them for the future; and if they do ſo, they are Worthy Communicants, though they have had but little time for the diſpatch of theſe great Concerns.

I cannot think there is any man ſo employed, but he may find time in the Morning and Evening to pray to God, and if he cannot make it a ſet-Duty, and be alone undiſturbed, Yet there may be fervent Ejaculations, by which he may lift up his heart to God, which God will hear, and have ſpecial regard to: And by the uſe of them, his mind will be kept in ſuch a Religious Frame and Temper, that he will be a worthy Com-

Communicant, and a welcome Guest at the Lords Table.

5. Let those who make this Excuse, consider the ill consequences of Non-Communicating. They that complain they want Time to prepare, find Time enough to commit those sins which make them unfit for that or any other Religious Duties. Whatever Business they have to do, they find time to harden their hearts against God and Religion, so that no impressions of Good may be made in them. He that at first thought he might not come, because he wanted Time to prepare, will afterwards refuse to come, though he hath more Time than he knows what to do with. Nay, he will rather throw it away, and his Soul with it, by spending it in the Service of the Devil, than in preparing to be a Worthy Communicant.

III. There is another Pretence, and that is the Temptations which attend the dispatch of necessary Business. Men say, they are forced to converse with sin-

ſinful Men, and are unavoidably betrayed to that which is evil, and therefore it is in vain for them to think of preparing for the Sacrament. Let ſuch conſider;

1. It may be they complain without a Cauſe, and that in Diſpatch of their Buſineſs, they are not Tempted to that which is really Evil. It may be *this* Man thinks, that he cannot prepare, becauſe his Buſineſs will unhinge the Devotion of his Mind, and put it out of that Religious Frame and Temper which he would keep it in, if he intended to partake. He thinks that a Man may not Receive, unleſs he can for ſome time keep his Mind ſo free from ſuch Incumbrances, as not to have a Thought of Worldly Buſineſs entertain'd by him. There is no Reaſon, why this ſhould hinder his Receiving. The lawful Diſpatch of Worldly Buſineſs, muſt not hinder Men from the Sacrament, nor muſt the Sacrament hinder men from the diſpatch of worldly Buſineſs. *We have no ſuch Rule.* If a man

man ſpends that time with his Cuſtomers, which he intended to ſpend with God in ſecret Devotion, and there hath been innocent Mirth, this is no Offence to God, only it is adviſeable, that at his return, he reduce his mind to ſeriouſneſs and devotion, in order to his Receiving, and then he needs not fear but he ſhall be welcome at the Lord's Table.

2. If, in the diſpatch of Buſineſs, men do that which is really evil: If they defraud, or if they are guilty of Drunkeneſs, (which is become ſuch a Concomitant of Trade, that there are a great many whom the Devil will not ſuffer to diſpatch their Buſineſs with their Cuſtomers, unleſs they diſpatch their Buſineſs with him at the ſame time) and it happens ſome days before the Sacrament; Let him Repent and humble his Soul to God, to think that he hath forgotten God and his own Soul, at that time when he ſhould have prepared for the Bleſſed Sacrament: And if he be ſincerely penitent, he need

need not omit it. Nay, he hath the more need to receive it, by how much he ſees how prone he is to fall into Temptations, that he may be kept from them. And if this hath happened a little before the Sacrament, and ſo near to it, that he cannot be ſatisfied of his Repentance, ſo as to come to the Sacrament the next time of Adminiſtration, let him go to his Miniſter, and bewail the Cauſe of his not Receiving: Let him think how happy Worthy Communicants are, and what a ſad thing it is, that he ſhould do that which makes him afraid of the Lords Table. But if this be the Caſe, *viz.* that he neglected to receive, and hopes that *this* will excuſe him; if he be not in the ſnare of the Devil, and under the Dominion of Sin, I am ſure no man in the World is. He may as well ſpeak plainly, and ſay, I love my ſin better than the Sacrament, and ſinful Companions better than pious Communicants. And I ſuppoſe theſe are the Men, as well as others, who keep from

from the Sacrament to avoi *Damnation!*

3. If Worldly Buſineſs brings Men into ill Company, and is the Occaſion of Sin, let them make haſt to diſpatch it, and tell the Company that they are to Communicate. Our Saviour ſaid *If any ſhall be aſhamed of me before men, of him will I be aſhamed before my Father.* He doubtleſs ſpake it in reference to the Deriſion with which *Jews* and *Heathens* thought to make Men Aſhamed of Chriſtianity (which was the Reaſon of the Croſs in Baptiſm). But in Our Age we had need make uſe of it to encourage one Chriſtian, whom another derides for obſerving the Inſtitutions of our Saviour. If there be any that are ſo aſhamed of Chriſt & his Ordinance, that they will rather go on to commit Sin for Company-ſake, than give ſuch a Reaſon; they are Unworthy indeed! For it appears plainly, that they are aſhamed of the Sacrament, but not of their Sin. The Sacrament was appointed to keep Men from

from Sin, but if they may not *both* be entertain'd, the Sacrament muſt keep off.

4. Let theſe Perſons conſider what manifeſt Contempt they caſt upon all other Ordinances of Chriſt. They can go to Prayers and Sermons all the year long, and it ſignifies nothing; for they can go to their ſinful Companions all the Week after, and it may be on the Lords Day as ſoon as the Publick Service is done, as if it were in Defiance of thoſe *little things* of Religion. They can confeſs their ſins, and, inſtead of forſaking them, run to them as ſoon as they have done. They can pray to the Great King of Heaven for Pardon, and make haſt to Rebel again. They can hear what the Great God commands, and what he promiſes, and what he threatens, but it all ſignifies nothing to them. *Pharaoh* and *Ahab* Regarded more what Miniſters ſaid, than they do. 'Tis only the Sacrament that they are afraid of, becauſe they have ſome Guilt and Fear which will not

not ſuffer them to make that approach to God, which they think is nearer and more Solemn. This ſhews the Caſe of the ſinner to be very deſperate. It appears plainly that he is reſolved to live a ſinful life, and that he will not have to do with *Religion* any farther than it ſhall leave him *Irreligious*. Praying and Hearing are weak things which his Sin keeps under, and doth not ſuffer them to prevail to the ſubduing of it; and becauſe he looks upon the Sacrament to be of greater force, he comes not at it.

5. If this be the caſe of the ſinner 'tis never like to be otherwiſe. This man doth not intend to leave his Trade, and therefore intends not to Communicate.

6. Let all perſons conſider, that the more worldly Buſineſs any one hath, the more neceſſary it is that he ſhould be a frequent Communicant. I mention this, becauſe many think that only they who have moſt leiſure from worldly buſineſs ought to be frequent Communicants, & that it cannot be expected from thoſe that have *many* or *great* concerns. This

ſuppoſeth that the Sacrament is only an Ordinance which was appointed, that Chriſtians ſhould pay their reſpects and acknowledgments to Chriſt by it, and not for the good of mens Souls,& to keep up in them a quick ſenſe of the Love of Chriſt to them, and to preſerve them from the power of Temptations, which hinders the growth of Grace and Piety. The Rich man,or the man that hath many worldly concerns, ſhould ſay: "I "have more need to frequent the Sa- "crament than others. I am in great "danger of loving the world more than "Chriſt, and he hath declared that he "will not account ſuch to be *Worthy of* "*Him*. I am in more danger than others, "of my heart being ſtolen away from "God, & therefore I will frequent that "Ordinance, that my Riches, or the de- "ſire of them may not *ruine* me. He that pleads buſineſs, and neglects the Sacrament,doth plainly declare that the *world* is uppermoſt in his eſteem, and that the Sacrament muſt not be regarded, but when the world will give way to it.

To

To Conclude this; Let me tell every ſuch Pretender, that he caſts a moſt manifeſt contempt upon the Sacrament. If the King ſhould ſend for him, & he were afraid of his diſpleaſure, neither Buſineſs nor Company muſt hinder, but that Chriſt commands his attendance is a little thing to him. If any news were brought to him of an eſtate or legacy, or any great worldly advantage, buſineſs and company muſt give way; but the Sacrament is only the concern of his Soul, and therefore it may be let alone.

IV. There is another general Pretence, and that is the danger of Relapſing. There are many who would receive the Sacrament, but they are afraid they ſhould fall into ſin again. Let ſuch perſons conſider:

1. Their caſe is very dangerous whilſt they neglect it. It is the Spiritual Food of the Soul: Men do not forbear their nouriſhment for fear it ſhould breed diſeaſes. It is the Souls Phyſick to purge away ſin: Men do not refuſe a *Remedy* for fear of a *Relapſe*. He that pleads this

doth not consider the Necessity of Communicating, but only the Danger of Receiving.

2. It is not expected that any can wholly avoid Temptations to sin after they have Receiv'd, but that they should be the more careful to avoid them, And that they should not allow themselves in them, but Repent and Amend. If men could be so Holy as this Pretence supposeth, no man should need to receive above once. But the Sacrament is appointed to be a continued Means by which men are more and more enabled against their Corruptions, which supposeth a continued Conteſt, but not an absolute Victory. Every man may resolve, that he will for the future strive against his sin, and whensoever his Conscience accuseth him of sinful Compliances, that he will repent and begg Gods Pardon and Gods Grace to withstand it for the time to come. And this every man must do that expects Salvation, tho he were not required to receive the Sacrament; and if he do so,

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he is a Worthy Communicant.

3. Thoſe that enter upon a Religious Life, and reſolve to come to the Sacrament upon ſerious debates, have no cauſe to fear Relapſe. If indeed a man comes to the Sacrament upon a ſudden Fit, in hope that it will remove ſome particular Trouble from him, and ſo make it an Experiment only, and ſin afterwards; this is no Relapſe into Sin, for he never forſook it. But thoſe who from a ſerious conſideration of their Duty, and of their danger whilſt they Neglect their Duty for the ſake of their Sin, do reſolve to enter into a new courſe of Life, and, with ſerious Reſolutions and hearty Prayers for Gods Grace and Bleſſing, come to the Sacrament, they need not fear but they ſhall perſevere in the wayes of Religion. For 1. The Grace of God will not be wanting to them. 2. Thoſe Arguments which induced them to be Religious, will continue and be of no leſs force for their Perſeverance in the Practice of Religion. Such a man cannot ſay, that

when he began to be Religious he did not well consider why he should be so, and therefore upon second thoughts he finds it best to go back again. 3. The Pleasure of Religion will continue and encrease. No man hath cause to say, 'tis such an uncouth and unpleasant thing to be Religious that I had better leave it off. He cannot say that the Non-Communicant who slights Religion, and avoids the thoughts of his own condition, hath more pleasure in his mind, than he that *Examines himself, & so eats of that Bread, and Drinks of that Cup.* These things consider'd, there is no such danger of Relapsing as the Non-Communicant is afraid of. 4. The good Success of Communicating shews that there is no such great danger. It may be there are some Communicants who live sinful Lives, but this is no reason why any should keep from the Sacrament for fear of relapsing; Because 'tis too probable that such persons receive the Sacrament, chiefly from their regard to the Profession of Christianty, &

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becauſe it is the *Duty* of every Chriſtian, and not that they may be the more Holy & Religious. This is a great Reaſon why you ſhould *Communicate* from Principles of true Piety, but no Reaſon why you ſhould fear relapſing, becauſe they never relapſed, but are the ſame that ever they were. He that ſuggeſts this to keep men from the Sacrament, knows the contrary. If there were ſuch a probability of revolting from God, he would not be ſo buſie to keep men from engaging themſelves to him. Where there is one ſinner that periſheth by returning to ſin, there are thouſands that periſh, becauſe they never began to be Religious.

Theſe are Pretences by which men ſlight their Saviour, & gratify the great enemy of their Souls. Theſe are his *Devices* by which he gets *Advantage* againſt men. By theſe he cheats men of the greateſt pleaſure in this Life, and of *Pleaſures for ever more* in the Life to come.

God of his infinite Mercy grant, that

Non-Communicants may consider how much they have Neglected their Duty and their Benefit: What dishonour they have occasioned to the Christian Religion, and what Destruction they are bringing to themselves, whilst they do foolishly think to avoid it. There never was a pretence, nor ever shall be, that will serve a mans turn for the Neglect of his duty. God hath made the way plain before every man, and if he turns out of it, 'tis because he is resolved he will not walk in it. The Sacrament is a very cheap and not a costly Sacrifice. No man is the Poorer, but every man may be the Richer for it. God requires nothing of any man in order to his Observance of it, but what he may do, and if he neglects to *Do this in Remembrance* of his Saviour, he cannot expect to be *Remembred* by him in his Heavenly Kingdom.

PRAYERS.

A PRAYER to be used, by those who have been Non-Communicants, from their refusing to be Reformed.

O Most gracious and merciful Lord God, who dost pardon and accept the vilest sinners when they repent, and return to the discharge of their Duties. I who have been a wretched Contemner of the greatest Love that ever was shewed to Mankind, do now prostrate my self before thee, lamenting from the bottom of my heart, that I have made many hypocritical pretences, when thy Word and my own Conscience told me, that I ought not to turn my back upon the Command and Invitation of my Saviour to this Holy Ordinance, but to have frequented it with the greatest Praise and Thankfulness: I must likewise, with shame and confusion of face, acknowledge that it was only for the sake of my sins (tho' the Temptations of the Devil, and the Corruption of my own naughty Heart) that I have thus wickedly departed from my God, & slighted the remembrance of my dying Saviour. O what a monster of ingratitude have I been! How have I walked in the paths of the destroyer, when I might have been welcom to my Saviour! I pretended that I was not pre-

prepared to be entertained by thee, but I was always prepared to ſin againſt thee. O how great is thy patience and loving kindneſs to me, that thou didſt not give me up to the hardneſs of my heart, by which I might never Taſt of thy Supper. O let my Soul from henceforth be ravithed with the Love of my Saviour, which, had it not been for thine infinite Mercy, might have been, before this time, ruin'd for ever by the love of my ſin. I pretended that I was unworthy, but thou Lord, who ſearcheſt the hearts of all men, knoweſt that I kept from thy Holy Table, becauſe I choſe to be unworthy. Thy Holy Spirit often ſtrove with me, but I reſiſted and quenched the motions of it: O how great is thy patience and goodneſs, that it is not utterly taken from me! Bleſſed, for ever Bleſſed be thy Name, that I who have deſerved the greateſt of thy Judgments, may yet be admitted to partake of the greateſt of thy Favours. O give me thy Grace, that I may come before thee with that Godly Sorrow for my ſins, which is never to be ſorrowed for; and with that Lively Faith which may quicken me to all Holy Obedience: O let thy Grace and Holy Spirit aſſiſt me in the performance of my Reſolutions, that I may be thine forever. Amen.

A Prayer to be uſed by thoſe who have been Non-Communicants, from a Miſtake concerning the Danger of Unworthy Receiving.

O Moſt good and gracious Lord God, thou art the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Conſolation. Thou delighteſt in the approaches of poor penitent ſinners into thy preſence. None of thy Commandments to us are grievous, but in keeping of them there is great Reward. So wonderful is thy goodneſs towards us, that whatſoever thou requireſt, is not ſo much to ſhew thy Authority over us, as thy goodneſs and loving kindneſs to us. Thou doſt not threaten the Diſobedient, to make them always afraid to appear before thee, but that they may amend their ways, and be graciouſly accepted of thee. Nor doſt thou require any thing of the Children of Men, but what thou doſt enable them to perform. Thou pardoneſt all unworthineſs that is not wilful, and doſt not only accept, but encourage all that are ſincerely deſirous to pleaſe thee, in the diſcharge of their Duties. Thou pitieſt and palleſt by the Infirmities and Errours of thoſe that ſincerely deſire and endeavour to keep thy Precepts. I who have been afraid to come to this Bleſſed Ordinance, do now deſire to draw near with full aſſurance of Faith, that my dear Saviour, who never rejected any that ſincere-

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ly loved him, will not only accept of me, but likewise encrease my Faith and Love towards him. Kæp me O Lord henceforth from all tormenting fears, which may hinder me from approaching to thæ, & delighting in thæ; and preserve that filial and reverential fear, which doth not cast out Love, but encrease it. Let me never forget, that whilst I am afraid to entertain my Sin, I næd not doubt of being entertained by my Saviour, but be assured, that his pretious Body and Blood will be my glorious Redemption. Pardon O Lord my former Omissions, and grant, that as oft as I eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, to shew forth his Death, I may happily find in me more and more the Death of Sin, and the encrease of a Spiritual and Heavenly Life, till at length I shall come to the perfection of Glory in thy Heavenly Kingdom, there to shout forth Eternal Hallelujahs to thæ, who sittest upon the Throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer to be used by those Penitents that are Converted from a Vitious and Profane Life.

ALmighty and most Glorious Lord God, Thou art a Great God, with whom is Terrible Majesty, and yet I have not dreaded thæ: A good and merciful God, and therefore have I, a wretched hellish Creature, hardned

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my heart against thee. All sinners acknowledge, that it is thy mercy that they are not consumed: O what Mercy is it! What patience and forbearance, that I am not now with the Devil and his Angels, who have only entertained them, and their accursed motions, to the dishonour of thy Holy Name, and the destruction of my own Soul, had not thy wonderful and astonishing Grace prevented it: And that's not all, for I have been the occasion of the horrid sins of many others; and some of them, for ought I know, are now in the place of Torments, blaspheming thy Patience and Forbearance towards me, because I am not there with them. I confess that I have been worse than a Beast before thee, in abusing my self, and those excellent faculties with which thou hast adorned my Soul, and which should have engaged me in honouring thee my Maker. I have not only made my self abominable in thy sight, and in the sight of all good Men, but in the sight of many that are bad, who shun that filthy unmanly Vice with which I have besotted my self and others.

I acknowledge that I have been a profane wretch, who, instead of resisting the Devil, have help'd him to promote his Kingdom: And that's not all that I have, with shame and confusion of face to acknowledge; for I have been more wicked than the Devil, in trifling with

with that Damnation which makes him tremble. Wilt thou save him who hath so often called to thee to Damn himself as well as others? Shall the Words of Eternal Life be spoken to him that hath made a sport of Eternal Death? I could not O Lord! I could not expect it, were it not for the infinite Merits of my Saviour, who gave his Body and Blood for the greatest Sinners: and the unspeakable Love of thy Holy Spirit, which is not wholly taken from me, as it might justly have been. Since then thou art a God of boundless Pity, and dost not delight in the death of the vilest Sinner, who hath delighted to grieve thy Holy Spirit; I come unto thee, my God and Saviour, that my filthy Soul may be washed and cleansed by thy pretious Blood. Pardon mine Iniquities, O Lord, for they are great, and let them be blotted out of thy remembrance for thy Names sake. Convert O Lord, those that have been my Companions in Wickedness, that I may meet them at this Holy Table; that we may have no more Communion with the unfruitful Works of darkness, but may take pleasure in a Holy Communion with thy Servants on Earth, which will bring us to an Eternal Communion with all thy Saints in Glory. Amen.

A Prayer after Receiving.

AND now O most Gracious God, What shall I render to thee for this inestimable Love, of which I have been a happy Partaker. I am returned from this Blessed Ordinance, O let my Soul be filled as with Marrow and Fatness. Let me always find by joyful Experience, how good it is to draw near to my God and Saviour, from whom I have thus long departed. Make me sensible, that one day in thy Courts is better than a thousand, and that this Spiritual Feast is sweeter than the Honey and the Honeycomb, or all the surfeiting Dainties which this vain and empty World affords. O Lord grant that I may never forget this Love of thine to my Soul, but let the Remembrance of it be quick and powerful in me, whensoever any Temptation to Evil doth assault me. Let not my Soul, which hath been washed with the Blood of my Saviour, be polluted any more with the World: But let the Remembrance of his being Crucified for me, Crucify my Affections to it. Grant that I may never use it so as to be abused by it, but let my Saviours Purchase for me, be ever valued above all Riches: And let his Love be so shed abroad in my heart, that I may despise all that this World affords, for the

the ſake of it. Keep me O Lord, from all ſecret as well as open Sins, that (having been waſhed in this pure Fountain) I may be cleanſed from all filthineſs here, and be made Partaker of thy Heavenly Joys, amongſt thy Holy Ones, forevermore. Amen.

A ſhort Prayer to be uſed by thoſe that were afraid of Relapſing.

O H that my Soul could ſufficiently magnifie thee my God and Saviour, which thou haſt ſo dearly purchaſed with thy pretious Body and Blood. Let the thankful Remembrance of it never ſlide out of my Mind. Aſſiſt my Reſolutions with thy Grace, that I may hold on in this way, and be ſtronger and ſtronger to reſiſt all Temptations to Evil. Let me O Lord, find by joyful Experience, that my Fears of approaching thy Table, proceeded from the Delusions of my great Enemy, who was loath to part with my pretious Soul: And that thou wilt readily give me thy Grace, by which I ſhall not leave nor forſake thee, And then I cannot be left or forſaken by thee, but ſhall be guided by thy Counſel, till I am received into thy Glory, where Satan ſhall be trodden under foot, and where I ſhall never ſin againſt thee, but praiſe thy Holy Name forevermore. Amen.

FINIS.